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[A FATEFUL MEETING.]

NOEL LORD ARDEN.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a strange scene, that brief conversation in the moonlight. Watson, standing at the mare's head, looked with interest on the two young noblemen as they gazed helplessly at the still, motionless form to which the pale silvery beams of the moon gave almost a supernatural beauty. The groom thought it one of the most perplexing things he had ever heard of. He was Yorkshire born and bred, and knew every family of note by sight for nearly twenty miles round Foxgrove; but he was quite certain he had never seen this young lady before. Then she was quite alone; she had no parcel, however small, to represent luggage, and she said she was going to London. For a young lady to be walking alone at nine o'clock on a September night, with the intention of catching a train to London, seemed to Wilson a perfect impossibility, yet the thing was a fact, or seemed so.

"What are we to do with her?"

It was Lord Brabourne who spoke. Noel was still chafing the ice-cold hands, and seemed to have no thought beyond his present task. Wilson, whose mind was running on the cosy supper awaiting him in the servants' hall, gathered courage, and suggested the only explanation that he deemed possible.

"My lord, I'm thinking maybe it's jest a sperit. There's a many walks in these parts, I've heard, though I can't say," here his teeth chattered nervously, "I ever saw one myself before."

Ira forgot their dilemma in a hearty laugh.

"My good fellow, I know Yorkshire pretty well, but I never yet encountered a 'sperit'; besides, they usually promenade (I believe) in long, trailing white garments; they don't speak and express a desire to go to London. No, whatever the poor girl's story may be, she is real living flesh and blood. We can't boast of an adventure with a ghost!"

"Then, my lord," returned Wilson respectfully, his thoughts still running on his supper, "hadn't we better take her to the Court?"

Lord Brabourne hesitated and looked at Noel.

"I don't think Mrs. Dane could refuse her at least a night's shelter," replied the Earl, answering the mute inquiry; "and, really, I don't see what else to do."

"There's no cottage for two miles beyond the Court," went on Wilson, cheerfully; "and, besides, they wouldn't take her in. Folks here are very shy of foreigners. Now, the mistress is from the South herself, and there's half-a-dozen spare rooms at the Court."

"At any rate, Nan is not superstitious," whispered Ira to his friend; "she won't credit this poor girl with being a ghost, which after what we have heard would, I fancy, be the character assigned her by the villagers. It's the only thing to be done, though I own it's the strangest adventure I ever met with."

Together they raised the girl's slight form and lifted her into the dog-cart; and Brabourne driving at a far slower and more cautious pace than usual they arrived without further accidents at the lodge gates, and three minutes later the mare stopped before the grand entrance to the Court.

A lady, young and fair, looking almost a

child in her heavy velvet dress, stood in the hall to meet them, and behind her was a gentleman who might have been her father—a tall, spare man, who stooped so much as to lose some of his inches, and seemed altogether too grave and old a husband for the fairy at his side. Brabourne once said the two reminded him of Beauty and the Beast. But Mr. Dane worshipped his wife, and there must have been some sterling excellences about him to win Nan's heart from half-a-dozen other claimants.

"How late you are!" cried Mrs. Dane, as she bestowed a sisterly kiss upon Lord Brabourne; "has there been an accident? You ought to have been here nearly an hour ago!"

"Yes," Brabourne had never felt quite so uncomfortable in his life. He had suddenly recollected he must explain matters not only to Nan but to Mr. Dane, and perhaps the latter would think he had been guilty of a liberty, he turned his house into a convalescent hospital. "And I've brought her here. I hope you and Dane won't mind, but really, there was nothing else to do."

Nan looked so mystified that Lord Arden interposed.

"I am as much to blame as Irs. I believe I persuaded him to risk your displeasure. You see we couldn't leave her in the lane."

Mrs. Dane looked relieved.

"Of course! If it is anyone ill you were quite right to bring them here, but when Irs. said he had brought an accident I did feel alarmed."

Very simply Noel told the story. Mr. and Mrs. Dane showed not the least excitement at their hospitality being taken for granted; and Irs. soon had to confess that if his cousin's husband did not shine in outdoor sports he had a very kind and compassionate heart; for orders were at once given to take the young lady to one of the spare rooms. The housekeeper and Mrs. Dane's own maid were summoned to attend to her; and Nan herself, after restlessly trying to do the honours of the supper to her guests, without a word of apology stole away to see after the girl, whose fate seemed so different to her own.

"I hope you don't mind," said Irs. a little helplessly, to Mr. Dane; "but, your groom assured us there was no inn for miles, and he seemed to think none of the cottagers would take me in."

"I don't mind in the least; but I own to a little curiosity about your protégée. I thought I knew everyone within walking distance by sight, but I caught a glimpse of her face as they were bringing her in, and she is a stranger to me."

"Wilson said the same."

"And he has a very good memory for faces."

"He started a very convenient explanation on the spot. His opinion is that the poor girl is a 'spirit.' I rather offended him by differing."

"She did not appear poor?" asked Mr. Dane.

"She is a lady," returned Noel, "and evidently in trouble. From her anxiety to catch the train I should say she had some urgent reason for wanting to be in London."

"It was the express she wanted to catch?"

"Yes."

"Then she must live near one of the stations on the branch line. People who lose the train there often drive over to Foxgrove to catch the express, and so get to London sooner in the end, but the strangest thing is her having no luggage."

Meanwhile restoratives had been applied, and at last Nan had the pleasure of seeing her charge slowly return to consciousness. Dismissing the maid for a glass of wine she knelt down by the sofa, where they had placed the little wail, and, stirring the fire into a brighter blaze, said gently,—

"My poor child! I am afraid you have been very tired!"

The blue eyes looked at her wistfully, and the tears stole slowly down the white cheeks.

"You mustn't be hard to me," said the girl, feebly, "or I shall break down and begin to cry!"

"I only want to help you," whispered Mrs. Dane.

"But where am I?" murmured the stranger. "How did I get here? Oh!" with a yearning entreaty, "was it only a horrible dream? Isn't it true, after all?"

Nan bent over her, hardly knowing what to answer; but Mrs. Dane had a good deal of her cousin Irs.'s plain-spokenness, and truth always seemed to her best as well as kindest.

"You are at Foxgrove Court. My cousin found you lying on the ground as he drove up from the station. You had fainted, and he and a friend did what they could to revive you, and you recovered enough to tell them you were going to the station to catch the train for London. It had been gone an hour, for you must have been lying unconscious a long time; so, as they did not know where you lived, they brought you here for me to take care of you."

"And didn't you mind?"

"To be sure not."

"But you didn't know anything about me?"

"You were ill, and in trouble," interposed Nan. "Surely that was enough?"

The wail shook her head.

"I didn't think anyone would ever speak kindly to me again!" she said, simply.

"But why?"

"My mother's dead; she died ten days ago, and she was all I had—my very all!"

"Poor child! But surely you are not alone in the world—you must have other ties or friends?"

A burning blush swept over the pale face, lighting up the blue eyes with a new beauty.

"I am quite alone," she answered, "and I shall be till I die! I don't want any friends—I won't make any. What is the use of my loving anything—it is sure to die?"

A little sob shook the slight frame, and Nan put her strong young arms round the girl, marvelling what trouble could have left her so hopeless and desponding.

When the wine came she administered it herself, smiling the while so kindly into the wail's face that she said feebly,—

"How good you are to me! Do you live here?"

"Yes."

"I never saw you before."

"No," and Mrs. Dane blushed in her turn.

"I have not been married very long, and my husband only brought me home six weeks ago."

"Married!"

There was such a look of amazement on her face that Nan almost laughed.

"I know I look very young," she said, simply; "but then, you see, we loved each other, and John is much older and wiser, so that he can make up with his prudence for the folly of my seventeen years."

"And you love him?"

"Of course I do; he is my husband!"

"But people don't always marry for love!" said the other girl, wearily, "at least, I thought not!"

"They are very miserable if they marry for anything else," retorted Mrs. Dane, briskly.

The wail looked at her with a strangely wistful expression, then said sadly,—

"I am in great trouble. Will you help me?"

"As well as ever I can."

"And you won't tell anyone?"

Nan thought a minute. Her impulse was to say "no one but John," then she remembered a woman will tell a sister-woman things she could not bear to have repeated even to that woman's husband, and she answered,—

"I will tell no one!"

The hand was seized with feverish eagerness and pressed to the lips of her strange

guest. It really seemed to her that the girl kissed her hand, because she dared not kiss her face.

"And I may tell it all to you and you will not be angry? You will try to help me?"

Nan bowed her head.

"I am trying to hide myself," said the girl, who a year older only than pretty idolised Mrs. Dane was yet alone in the world, and, as it seemed, a fugitive from everything good and pleasant, "trying to go away somewhere, so that no one who has ever seen me will be able to find me. Three weeks ago I had not a trouble in the world except being poor, and now I am so unhappy I should like to die!"

"You mustn't say that," pleaded Nan. "You are so young, and comfort must come to you in time!"

The wail shook her head.

"I won't tell you where we lived. It is not more than twelve miles from here, and I dare say you will drive through the place some day. It is so pretty and so quiet—just the spot anyone with a great sorrow would like to come to. I hadn't thought so too, and so she brought me there fifteen years ago, and we have lived there ever since. I couldn't make you understand how good she was and how I loved her! We two were just the world to each other."

"And has you no friends?" asked Nan.

"At first, but Mr. Dale died; his family went away, and the new vicar hated us. I don't know why," said Nell simply; "but he seemed as though we had done him some grievous wrong. He was a hard, cruel man, and I hated him!"

"And your mother?"

"Mother never liked anyone; she was too good. Well, everything went wrong after Mr. Dale died. The bank failed, all our money was lost, and my mother grew ill. They told me, 'went on Nell, pitiously, 'a warmer climate might save her, that if she went to Devonshire she might live for years. Mrs. Dane, you said just now no one married for anything but love, unless they were very wicked, so you will think me very wicked. I promised to marry someone just because he was kind and would let me take my mother to Devonshire!"

"Not wicked," said Nan, tenderly, "only mistaken, dear. It was a sacrifice they should not have let you make."

"I promised," whispered Nell. "He went away, but he was to return next week. I knew that if he is alive he will come. It is too late to save her, and I don't turn from me—I am going to break my promise. I am going to London just to hide from him!"

"But you had better tell him," pleaded Nan. "Indeed, indeed, it will be best. No man who loved you could hold you to a promise given under such circumstances."

Nell shivered.

"You don't know him! I am afraid of him; his eyes seem to scorch my face. I should not dare to tell him, so I am going to hide away. Do you know what my mother said on her death-bed? She took both my hands in hers and said, 'You may be lonely and friendless, darling, after I am gone; the world may seem cold and harsh to you, and the fight with trouble may make you yearn to be at rest; but, Nell, promise me one thing, and I shall die easy about you. Never marry any man unless you love him with your whole heart, and feel that you can trust him. Never believe in anyone who comes to you with secret attentions. If you marry let it be a man who is not ashamed of your obscurity and poverty, who will woo you before his friends as proudly as though you were an heiress. Only promise me this, little one, and I am content.'"

"I put my hand in hers," sobbed Nell, "and I gave the promise; so now you see I must hide myself from him. I couldn't break my word to my mother."

"But, my dear, he couldn't marry you against your will?" remonstrated Nan, "and

why should you leave your home on his account?"

"I have no home now!" said Nell. "I am going to London. I was born there, mother used to say, and I know that it is so big one can easily be hidden. I mean to work for my living, and keep my promise to mother."

"And you have no friends?"

"I have no friends. The cottage was hired from month to month. I have paid the rent, and the landlord took the furniture as it stood. We owe nothing in the place. I sent my luggage yesterday, and now I have only to go myself."

"But what will you do?" asked Nan, sadly.

"How can you work for your living, a girl like you?"

"I have ten pounds!" returned the other, "and I am stronger than I look. Oh! I shall get on very well, only—" and her voice broke. "It will be lonely. I shall miss my mother!"

"Why not stay here?"

Nell shook her head.

"I cannot. I should always fear him; besides, there is the Vicar."

"But how could he harm you?"

"I forgot!" The lips quivered ominously. "I did not tell you that. He came to me when she lay dead. My mother had told me that it was his duty to reveal the truth. He knew my mother long ago, when she was a girl, before he was a clergyman." Here Nell's voice broke hopelessly, she could do nothing but sob.

"Don't tell me any more," urged Nan, tenderly. "I can guess the rest!"

Nell sighed.

"I think it is true!" she said, dejectedly. "Mother never mentioned my father to me, never once; and when I asked her to tell me about him she cried, and could not answer. My poor, beautiful mother! Oh! Mrs. Dane, I think men are cruel and heartless, and I will never believe in one as long as I live; and though my father may be alive now, for aught I know, though he may be rich and grand, I would far rather be what I am, a nameless waif, with a life of hard work before me, than take a sixpence from him."

Nan put her charge to bed with loving care; then she went downstairs to find that it was past midnight, and the gentlemen had retired to the smoking room.

"Oh! Jack," she said, when her husband joined her later, "how much misery there is in the world, and what have I done that I should be happy?"

Mr. Dane kissed her.

"I don't know, dear; but I hope you may always continue so. You shall if I can manage it."

"That poor girl!"

"Have you found out anything about her?"

"She has lost her mother, and is going to London to earn her living. She sent her luggage on yesterday—to save expense, I fancy."

"Your cousin thought she was a lady."

"She is a lady!" said Nan, gently; "but very, very poor. Jack, I should like to do something for her!"

"You can't offer her money?" said Mr. Dane, thoughtfully, "or I would write you a cheque directly."

"No! and I can't offer to act as reference to her respectability, because, though I believe in her myself, I know nothing about her, Jack. What can I do?"

"She is not penniless, I suppose?"

"She has ten pounds. Just fancy, Jack, ten pounds to keep her until she gets something to do! Why, I give more for a single dress."

"You might tell her to write to you if she were ever in trouble. But if she is sensitive she would hardly like to send you a begging-letter. The only thing I can think of is to give her a trinket."

Nan stared.

"A trinket! when she may come! to want daily bread! Jack, I can't see the use of that."

"My dear Nan, if you pick out a really valuable ornament it will always fetch something, perhaps not more than half its real worth, but still enough to be a boon to any one in distress. The gift of a trinket can't hurt your *protégée's* feelings, and may some day do her a real service."

The next morning Nan took from her jewel box a locket of rich dead gold; set with a single diamond. It had been the gift of a wealthy aunt for whom the little lady had scant affection. Hastily removing a tress of her relative's hair, Nan replaced it by her own photo, on the back of which she wrote in pencil,—

"If ever a time comes (though I pray it never may) that you need help, remember this locket is your own. The likeness is a keepsake, but the locket is for you to do just as you please with."

"A good thought!" said Mr. Dane, as he watched her. "She would never sell your photograph, and in taking it out she would read your message."

Lord Brabourne and Noel were full of curiosity about their *protégée*, but Nan was not communicative.

"I am very glad you found her. It was just as you thought. She particularly wanted to go to London, and fainted from fatigue after trying to walk to Foxgrove. I sent her in the brougham this morning in good time for the first train, so she will not have lost so many hours after all."

Noel started.

"Then she is really gone?"

"You might have kept her a little longer, Nan," remonstrated her cousin; "she was too ill to travel."

Nan took the reproof very meekly.

"She was so anxious to be in London that I think the disappointment of delay would have done her more harm than the journey. For my own sake, I would have kept her gladly. I quite lost my heart to her, poor child!"

"What was her name?"

"Nell."

"Nell what?"

Mrs. Dane shook her head.

"She did not tell me."

"And you never asked her?"

"Somehow I could not. Nell just suited her. I did not want to hear it joined to some horribly commonplace appellation. Now I can always think of her as just 'Nell.'"

"Which is nearly as vague as Wilson's 'epirit.' That young man will be confirmed in his supernatural tendencies if he discovers Miss Nell has vanished as suddenly as she came!"

They spent a very pleasant time at the Court.

Nan was a perfect hostess, and Mr. Dane's pride and delight in his wife were so genuine that Lord Brabourne became a little more satisfied with his cousin by marriage, though he still thought it a great mistake that he could not shoot.

The visit was prolonged till the following Monday, when, after promises to repeat it before many months, the friends started for the shooting-box in Scotland, which had been their original destination.

The train was rather full, and even a silver key could not procure a compartment to themselves. The next best thing was one occupied by a solitary traveller, whom the guard declared meant to alight at the next station but two.

They had hardly seated themselves when Brabourne caught sight of their fellow-passenger for the first time, and recognised him as a man he had met in Devonshire.

"Why, Palmer, who would have thought of seeing you in these parts! Are you bound for the moors, like ourselves?"

Mr. Palmer did not seem overjoyed at the meeting.

"I am going to Milby for a day or two. I was down there in the summer, and made a few pleasant acquaintances I wish to renew."

"I never was there; but I thought it boasted

nothing but fine scenery, which is not in my line."

"The scenery is superb!"

"Ah! You see you're in training for that sort of thing. When a man's engaged he takes to raving about scenery as naturally as a duck does to water."

Lord Arden laughed at the simile, and even the stranger could not forbear a smile.

"Do you speak from experience?" he inquired.

"I can't say I do; but I have met several couples in an advanced stage of lunacy, and I know to scale steep hills and rave about the sunsets as seen from the summits; to go botanising in the woods, and spend hours among ruins are all incipient signs of the malady. Now, Milby is provided with ruins, hills, and woods; so no wonder it finds favour in your eyes and those of Lady Charlotte Maitland."

"Only Lady Charlotte is not there."

"Indeed!" meaningly; "yet you are going."

"A fellow can't possibly always be tacked on to his *fiancée* as though he were part of her toilet," objected Mr. Palmer. "I have been spending three weeks with the Maitlands, and now I am 'off duty.'"

When he had left the carriage Noel turned to Ira.

"I don't want to abuse the fellow if he's a friend of yours, but I never took a greater dislike to anyone. I could have shaken him. Who is he?"

"No friend of mine. Only a passing acquaintance. I know the Maitlands tolerably well, and he is always there. As you gathered, he is to marry Lady Charlotte, the eldest daughter."

"Poor thing!"

"Why do you pity her?"

"Because I believe her *fiancée* is a scoundrel!"

Brabourne opened his eyes.

"Of course, you can't be expected to take a fancy to every man you meet; and, as I said before, Palmer is no friend of mine, but, Arden, it's rather strong language to call him a scoundrel."

"But he looks one!"

"He comes of a very good family. The Palmers have been known at Chalford for centuries; they have a very pretty place there called the Manor House. They have had reverses of late years, and I daresay Truscott is a good deal poorer than his ancestors. Still, he's a gentleman."

"Then why did he talk of Lady Charlotte in that offensive strain, and what's he doing at Milby?"

"I did not like his manner any better than you did; but the engagement is simply one of convenience. She has money, and is rather anxious to escape from an uncongenial home. Then Palmer, in spite of your prejudice, is a fine figure of a man, and can give her a name as old as her own."

"I see; she wants to be a matron, and he requires ready money, and people call that matrimony. To my mind, Ira, it's simply a desecration to the word. I hate such things."

"Well, you know," returned Brabourne, philosophically, "there are a good many matches of that sort every season. Lady Charlotte's forty, and a woman has left off hoping to inspire a *grande passion* at that age, I fancy."

"But has a man become incapable of feeling one at thirty-five? Answer me that!"

"Perhaps not. Well, Noel, don't let's quarrel over Palmer's domestic prospects. It's not worth while. What did you think of Nan in her new rôle of a married lady?"

Noel hesitated.

"Speak out?" exhorted his friend. "If you tell me she has thrown herself away I shan't be offended, though Dane is a nicer fellow than I expected. He improves on acquaintance, and shows to advantage in his own house."

"I believe," said Lord Arden, slowly, "I envied him."

"But you never admired Nan?"

"I don't mean I envied him your cousin, but that I think if I could find a wife who would look up at me like that, and believe in me as intensely as she does in him—I'd be married to-morrow. John Dane is a happy fellow!"

"Well, Lady Nora will bless me if the visit to Foxgrove converts you from your errors?"

"She will, indeed."

"I wonder which will marry first, you or I?"

"You seem to take it as a foregone conclusion that we shall both commit the deed some day?"

"We must," said Ira, simply. "We are both that highly objectionable being, an only son—and we are both blessed with mothers, who, unlike the generality of ladies, desire, as their chief earthly blessing, a daughter-in-law."

Noel did not reply. He was looking out of the window when he spoke five minutes later. It was quite on a different subject.

"I wonder who she was?"

"Who?"

"That girl we saw last."

Brabourne shook his head.

"We shall never know. I don't fancy, from Nan's manner, she found out very much herself; and my small cousin has one great peculiarity—she is thoroughly able to keep a secret. She thinks, evidently, the less we hear of our *protégée* the better, so she told us only that her name was Nell, and she was going to London."

"It just suits her. Nell is a pretty name." "Can't agree with you. It sounds to me only fit for a mare. But I shall not forget that girl in a hurry; she was pretty if her name wasn't."

Noel shook his head.

"I did not think so."

"Not pretty!" exclaimed Lord Brabourne.

"Why her eyes would have made her pretty, without anything else; they were as bright as stars and as blue as forget-me-nots. Perhaps you thought her plain, as your taste is so peculiar."

"I thought her," he paused, "the loveliest creature I had ever seen, and I shall remember her face to my life's end, if I never see it again."

Lord Brabourne said nothing. He was not a very quick perceiver, but it did dawn on him.

Noel spoke with unusual warmth, and it struck him his cousin, Mrs. Dane, had been very prudent in not letting her guests see any more of the girl they had saved.

But though Ira kept silent, "Nell" occupied his thoughts a great deal more than he would have believed. He actually found himself thinking how those blue eyes would brighten up the stately rooms of Brabourne Hall, which had lost a great deal of their sunshine when Nan left her aunt's guardianship for that of Mr. Dane!

"Bah!" he muttered at last; "what an idiot I am getting! Fancy me thinking about a girl whose very name I don't know! I believe Noel is just as foolish, though. Well, I'm glad he didn't see any more of her. He is dreadfully romantic, and I don't fancy Lady Nora would like a little waif to be Countess of Arden. My mother is quite a different woman."

By which it will be seen that Lord Brabourne had been a good deal more impressed by the little episode than anyone who knew would have expected.

They had first-rate sport in the north. Two other men joined them, and the four spent a month most enjoyably; then the party broke up. Ira had promised to meet his mother in Paris, and Lady Nora began to send piteous letters to Noel, asking if he never meant to return to the Court.

After all, he went home unexpectedly, with-

out a word of notice, and as he walked up the avenue the first object that caught his eye was a young lady in a costume of ruby velvet, with a soft fur hat resting coquettishly on her bright hair. She came to meet him with an air of perfect self-possession and a ready smile.

"I am sure you are Lord Arden! You are just like your photographs," she said, simply. Noel raised his hat.

"You are perfectly right, but you have the advantage of me. I cannot even guess at your identity!"

"Lady Una wrote to tell you I was staying here!"

"Did she? But perhaps you have only come lately, and since I left Scotland a week ago I have travelled about and missed all my mother's letters, so you must excuse my ignorance, and kindly tell me to whom I have the pleasure of talking."

"I am Judith."

"Judith —?" he asked, inquiringly.

"The other is such a horrid name," she pouted. "It is quite an infliction to have been born with it. Fancy being called Miss Watts!"

Noel had a good memory. He had heard the romance of his uncle's life (as his mother believed it), and knew that this charming girl was the daughter of the woman who might have been Countess of Arden. She was very, very pretty; she seemed to remind him of some bright tropical bud. She did not touch his heart as the little waif he had seen in the moonlight had done; but he was quite ready to be friends with her. He knew that as a girl his mother had not admired Miss Leslie, but that her disinterestedness in marrying the man of her heart had touched Lady Nora, and she had often thought of seeking her out and renewing the old friendship. He supposed she must have done so since he left home.

"No," said Judith, simply. "Mother wrote to Lady Nora, and then she sent and invited me to come and stay with her. It does seem so strange to be living in mother's old home!"

"I hope you can make yourself happy. It is rather a dull house for a young lady."

"Dull!" said Judy, wonderingly. "Why, I think it is like heaven. There are no children, no mending, and no bills. Oh, Lord Arden, how can you call it dull!"

The frank allusion to her home troubles was not lost upon Noel. He thought what a pretty candid child she was to speak so openly, and then he found himself walking at her side to Lady Nora's boudoir.

"My dear boy!"

They were quite alone. Judith brought him in with a little air of triumph as though he were some wonderful acquisition discovered by herself; but then, with rare tact, she discovered she had to dress, and left mother and son together.

"What a pretty child!"

Lady Nora, who had taken Judy to her heart of hearts, and was quite ready to accept her as a daughter-in-law on the spot, felt delighted.

"She is a darling!" replied the widow, enthusiastically, "and I do so enjoy having her with me!"

"How did you pick her up?"

"Noel, what a way to speak of a young lady!"

"Well, what made you ask her here?"

"Kathleen wrote to me saying she was living near London, and one of the girls was very delicate, and needed country air. She thought that perhaps, for the sake of old times, I would invite her to pay me a visit."

"And of course you jumped at the idea, quite forgetting Miss Watts might turn out very different from what she is?"

"I did nothing of the sort. I went to London and answered the letter in person! Oh, Noel! If you had only seen the house where they live you would be as glad as I

am that the poor child should have a little pleasure!"

"Then they are poor?"

"Poverty is no word for it! They have actually no income at all. They live—fancy, twelve persons beside the servant—on what that unfortunate man can make by selling wine on commission!"

"Twelve persons?"

"Ten children. There is one girl older than Judith, the rest are much younger. Five died after her!"

"Mother!" exclaimed Lord Arden, "stop, or I shall suspect you of invention. Do you honestly mean to insinuate that Mrs. Watts has had fifteen children?"

"Yes."

"Poor Judith!"

"She is the flower of the family. You think her pretty, don't you, Noel?" asked his mother, anxiously.

"Very pretty, and dressed to perfection."

Lady Nora blushed.

"You know I could not have the dear girl feeling uncomfortable among our neighbours; besides, with a little tact I hope this visit may prove a very important one to her. Why should I not send Judith back to her parents engaged?"

"Why, indeed!" asked Noel, innocently, never letting his mother discover that he saw through her tactics, and knew perfectly his was the heart she desired to offer up at Judith's shrine. "There are plenty of bachelors in the neighbourhood! If you had only given me a hint I'd have brought Brabourne; he's just the man!"

Lady Nora did not feel quite so hopeful, so like a skilful woman she changed the subject.

"How did you enjoy yourself?"

"Exceedingly!"

"And has that pretty cousin of his really sobered down into a matronly lady?"

"Nan? She's Mrs. Dane, but I don't think she has particularly sobered down. She is quite as charming as ever. I told Ira he ought to have had her."

Dinner was not a lengthy repast, and Noel did not linger over his wine. It was pleasant to see Judith's face in the drawing-room when he joined the ladies. She certainly was marvellously pretty, and yet there was a strange something about her which he did not quite like.

She was tall and wonderfully developed for her seventeen years. Her hair was blue-black, and she wore it plaited in a coronal on the top of her shapely head. Her features were a trifle too large, but wonderfully picturesque; indeed, that one word described Judith better than anything else. In looking at her you felt instinctively how well she would pass as Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, or even her namesake, the Judith of the Bible tragedy. But you never fancied her as the ministering angel of a house. You could not have imagined the bright, brilliant creature managing a house or teaching her children, or nursing a sick husband. She made a charming picture—that was all. But Lady Nora never realized this. To her mind Judith was perfect; besides, she was a very generous-minded woman, and there seemed something of poetical justice to her in the thought of Kathleen's child wearing the title that might have been her mother's. So she threw the two young people together by every means in her power, and chanted Judith's praises to her son whenever she had him to herself.

Lord Arden was kind and courteous to his guest. He devoted himself attentively to Judith's amusement; rode with her, taught her to skate when the frost came, and in the long winter evenings often read aloud for her amusement. Lady Nora and Judith, although they never exchanged a word on the subject, yet felt almost as sure of Noel's decision as though he had already proposed. The girl was too unused to society, the mother too hopeful to realize that such attentions as Lord Arden paid to Judy were such as a young man would hardly refuse to a girl visiting at his

own house. Nine years his junior, he treated Judy not at all unlike a pet child. His kindness to her had in it no element of jealousy or excitement. He was perfectly contented to leave her for a whole day when the hounds met in the neighbourhood. If his mother gave a dinner-party, and his rank forced him to take in some stately dowager, he never seemed anxious lest Judy should smile too kindly on whatever cavalier was allotted to her. She might have been his sister or his niece for all the appropriation he seemed to desire; but Lady Nora and Judy both blinded themselves to these and similar signs; both the elder and the younger lady firmly believed the latter's fate was fixed, and that the coronet of the Ardens would rest on her brow.

And while all went so gladly at the Court, while life was so blithe and pleasant, each day bringing its succeeding pleasures, somehow the Earl could never quite forget that scene in the Yorkshire lanes, when the moonlight showed him the only face that ever really touched his fancy. He might sit by Judy's side, he might spend his days in her society, but it was Nell's voice which haunted him—Nell's blue eyes which even in his dreams seemed ever looking yearningly into his face.

He was not a superstitious man, but yet a dream which came to him one night, a month before Christmas, cast an impression on him he could not easily shake off.

He saw Nell. Well, there was nothing strange in that; there were few nights her face did not come to him in dreamland; but on this particular one she spoke. She was thinner and paler, or it seemed so to him; her face was worn and sad, there were tears in her sweet blue eyes. He put one hand on her shoulder, and called her by her name. A strange look of piteous entreaty came to her face. She clasped her hand in supplication, and uttered the one word, "Come!" Before he could answer she had vanished from his sight, and in the place where she had stood he saw a hand-post marked "To London!"

Lord Arden slept no more that night. A fever of unrest took possession of him, and when his valet came to call the Earl at eight o'clock he found him in his dressing-room fully dressed, and busily studying Bradshaw.

(To be continued.)

HOW POSTAGE STAMPS ARE MADE IN THE UNITED STATES.—The design of the stamp is engraved on steel, and, in printing, plates are used on which two hundred stamps have been engraved. Two men are kept at work covering these with coloured inks and passing them to a man and girl, who are printing them on hand-presses. Three of these little squads are employed all the time. After the small sheets of paper containing two hundred printed stamps are dried enough, they are sent into another room and gummed. The gum used for this purpose is a peculiar composition, made of the powder of dried potatoes and other vegetables mixed with water. After having been again dried, this time on little racks fanned by steam power for about an hour, they are put between sheets of pasteboard and pressed in hydraulic presses capable of applying a weight of two thousand tons. The next thing is to cut the sheet in two; each sheet of course, when cut, containing one hundred stamps. This is done by a girl, with a large pair of shears, cutting by hand being preferred to that done by machinery, which would destroy too many stamps. Next they are pressed once more, and then packed, labelled and stowed away, to be sent out to the various offices, when ordered. If a single stamp is torn or in any way mutilated, the whole sheet of one hundred stamps is burned. Not less than five hundred thousands are said to be burned from this cause every week. The greatest care is taken in counting the sheets of stamps to guard against pilfering by employes, and it is said that during the past twenty years not a single sheet has been lost in this way.

DOROTHY.

—o—

He dreamed of the fan in her fingers,
And worshipped her tiniest curl;
He was Robert, the son of the Rector,
She was Dorothy, niece of the Earl.
He came, as she stood in the sunlight—
So fair, and so cold, and so sweet—
And lifted his heart as a goblet
And poured out its wine at her feet.

She made to his folly no answer,
Save looks of surprise and disdain,
And swept through the velvet-draped portal,
And left him alone in his pain.
He passed from her threshold for ever—
And lo! as he went, on the stair
He found a white virginal rosebud
That Dorothy dropped from her hair.

From the roll and the roar of the cannon,
Where the waves of the battle ran high,
To the white-curtained bed of a cottage,
They brought a young soldier to die.
Oh! deep in his breast was the bullet;
But the hurt in his heart was more deep,
And, ever, on Dorothy calling,
He fell, at the twilight, asleep.

Under the shade of the sacred
Dark cedar, they laid him to rest.
A comrade, in kneeling beside him,
Discovered a flower on his breast;
It was soaked with his life's richest crimson,
No longer of purity rare,
But scentless and dead; 'twas the rosebud
That Dorothy dropped from her hair.

Afar from the grave by the cedar,
While the snowflakes were falling without,
A battle-scarred leader was telling
Of the fight and the foe put to rout;
He spoke of the sweep of the sabres,
Of the rain of the pitiless lead;
And he showed them the blood brightened
blossom
That he found on the breast of the dead.

The niece of the Earl, as she listened,
Had lost all her delicate bloom;
And now she had fainted and fallen,
And they carried her out of the room.
The eyes of his hearers were misty,
And the heart of the flower was laid bare;
For it crumbled to dust in his fingers,
The rosebud from Dorothy's hair.

M. I.

DRIVEN TO WRONG.

—o—

CHAPTER XIX.—(continued.)

"Oh, indeed!" returned Mr. Hilhouse, in a tone so cold as to surprise his host, who looked at him inquiringly, but as he made no further remark, the banker went on.

"Gresham's the man to get the money out of people's pockets. They all seem to think he does them a favour in accepting it for the various uses he requires it for; and the way this restoration fund gets on is wonderful. As one of the churchwardens, I am delighted at the result—delighted. You'll find us somewhat in a muddle now, and I wish you had not arrived till it was quite completed. The Bishop is much interested in the matter, and has subscribed himself liberally. He said to Mr. Gresham the other day, 'The outside of the old church is perfect, the inside is a disgrace.' Why, it looks like a cattle market, with the people penned up in those dreadful old square pews, or did, for there is not one of them left, and the seats are nearly all erected. The chancel has been beautifully inlaid, and Miss Hilhouse is giving us a handsome brass eagle as a lectern; while a brass and ebony pulpit is to be the gift of Mrs. Charlton. You won't know the church again, my dear Hil-

house. Once more, I repeat, there is nothing like new blood—nothing! And the surplined choir is such an improvement, and the music now is wonderfully good."

"And you approve of all these changes!" gasped the Rector, indignantly. "I thought you were a man of common sense, and sound, solid judgment. It is high time I returned to my parish, Mr. Slowcombe. I certainly never expected these views from you!"

"I daresay not," returned the churchwarden, politely. "We had so long worked in a groove, that we were satisfied, not thinking of anything outside it; but now that we have 'broken cover,' and see the better aspect of affairs beyond our cramped and narrow circle, why, I don't think any of us will be content to go back to it—I don't, indeed. Everybody in the parish is pleased, except Mr. Blight, and it is natural that he should be sore upon the subject, for you see he has lost his congregation. By-the-by, Gresham has the most exquisite brass cross over the altar—his own gift—and he didn't get it for nothing, I can assure you."

"A brass cross over the altar!" cried the Rector, "and theatricals in the schools in aid of the church fund! and the children taught to murder each other by such examples as that abominable Punch and Judy! All this is being done in my parish; and you, who are one of its churchwardens, stand by and consent to it? Mr. Slowcombe, I am ashamed of you!"

Saying which the Rector of Market Glenton arose, and left the room in a perfect whirlwind of fury.

Outside the door of Mr. Slowcombe's house Mr. Hilhouse met Samuel Biggs.

He had been to a funeral that day, and was still clad in his shabby black garments, now more rusty than ever; and his unusually tall hat looked tall indeed, and as though it had been brushed with pomatum, so curiously sleek and shiny was it.

His grave, lantern-jawed face looked more grave and more condemnatory than ever. As he suddenly saw the Rector, he made a dead stop.

He knew as well—as well—what Mr. Hilhouse's feelings would be concerning the changes in the parish, and took up his keynote accordingly, notwithstanding that he was then going to the schoolrooms to see whether he could get anyone to let him in, to witness the "screaming farce," advertised in such large letters on the play-bill. Samuel Biggs had no intention of paying even half-price to get in; but he thought he might possibly slip through the door unobserved, thus late in the evening, and he meant to try.

It was many years since Samuel had seen a play, and he intended to try and witness this one *sub-rosa*; but he was aware that the Rector could not possibly know this, so he stood before him with a melancholy mien.

"These are sad doings here, sir, very sad! The world has gone after Mr. Gresham, sir, so to speak; and although it is not for a humble creature like me to talk, still, sir, I have my feelings, like my betters, and me and Mr. Blight has mingled our tears together over the falling away of those who we thought before were our examples."

And Samuel shook his head with a slow and automaton-like movement.

Mr. Hilhouse grasped his long, bony, clammy fingers in a friendly clasp.

"Then I have one left true to me," he gasped. "Samuel Biggs, nothing should have kept me away had I known what was going on here."

"Thank Heaven, you have returned at last!" answered the hypocrite, fervently. "When I saw your sainted face, my first outspoken words, breathed from the heart, were 'thank Heaven!' and I repeat them aloud. Oh! these changes; oh! the wicked ways of this wicked world, Mr. Hilhouse! Him so young, and so deceitful! with his sweethearts by the score. Their age don't matter at all, and my lips shame to frame the words. Confession in the study,

hallowed by so many years of your worthy presence! Yet the whole parish has gone after him; there is no doubt about that, and to-night they're play-acting—they are, indeed! If you hadn't returned, Heaven only knows where they would have stopped."

And Mr. Biggs took a handkerchief from his pocket, which had been placed there ready for some part of the funeral obsequies, and applied it to his eyes and brow.

"I'm but a humble instrument, Mr. Hilhouse; but if I can serve you, if I can be of any use, you have only to command me, to prove my faithfulness."

It was not often that the Rector of Market Glenton had a generous impulse; but, upon this occasion, his heart went out to Samuel Biggs so decidedly as to touch his pocket, and he felt in it for some coins to prove his kindly feeling.

Two half-crowns touched his fingers suggestively.

Yes! he would give Samuel five shillings as a reward for his staunchness, and he drew the coins very nearly out of his pocket, but not quite.

Somehow, one slipped through his fingers back again, and Mr. Hilhouse thought one half-crown would express his feelings quite as well, and would please the other equally, inasmuch as he was unaware how nearly he had had the second.

"Come to my house to-morrow, Biggs," he said, pleasantly, "and you can tell me all that has been going on."

"I will indeed, sir, if you'll name the hour, and think myself honoured by your confidence; and anything I can do—"

"Yes, yes! you may be able to serve me. Come at half-past nine."

"Half-past nine! Them good old times is over at the Rectory, sir; breakfast is not before that hour now!"

"Come at half-past nine," repeated the Rector, sternly. "I shall have breakfast at eight o'clock as usual."

"Of course, sir, of course. I'll be there punctually, quite punctually."

"And Samuel, here is something for you, and if you drink my health, let it be in a good warming cup of cocoa."

"You know me, Mr. Hilhouse," and he pointed to the broad band of dark blue ribbon in his button-hole, "and you may trust me."

"Yes; I believe you're a very good young man," acknowledged the Rector. "But, Biggs, surely you used a wrong word when you said 'confession' was held in my study?" and he looked keenly at the flabby face before him.

Mr. Biggs shook his head monotonously.

"No, sir; there is no mistake, I wish there was."

Then he drew very near, and whispered the secret of the new red baize door.

"It ain't even a respectable green, sir," he objected, "but a barefaced red, and covered with brass nails like stars, as would be suited to a queen's coffin!"

Mr. Hilhouse groaned.

"And are my churchwardens aware of these facts?" he asked.

"I'm afraid so. There's one who thinks Mr. Gresham will be a good match for his daughter, and the other, why, he's led away like the rest of them. Even Miss Marion and Miss Hilhouse herself—"

"Hush! No one must speak of any member of my family, Biggs. I will not permit it," interrupted Mr. Hilhouse, sternly. "At half-past nine to-morrow, then," and he was turning away when he was stopped by Biggs.

"Accept my humble thanks for your generous donation towards my wants, sir," he said obsequiously.

"Not at all, not at all," replied the Rector, and again turned away and knocked at the door of his second churchwarden.

He, too, was gone to the theatricals!

Mr. Hilhouse again groaned in spirit, and Samuel watched him from a distance.

"Backsliders, backsliders, every one of them!" he muttered, as he stood with bent head upon the path, hesitating what next to do; then started off at a brisk pace towards the school-rooms, Samuel following him in the distance, with a strange smile upon his face.

"There will be a blooming row between the lot of them," he chuckled, "there will, indeed; and there's sure to be windfalls and pickings for the likes of me! They'll all want help, every one of them. There's so many things the gentry can't do for themselves," and he rubbed his bony hands together unctuously with pleasant anticipation, and went on following the Rector like a shadow.

Mr. Hilhouse entered the school yard, and going round by a back way took possession of a small window, leaving numerous little boys and girls with their noses flattened against the panes of those in the yard itself.

He watched the actors upon the stage within, with hands clenched in anger, and heard the bursts of applause of the audience—his quiet parishioners, whom he had left so sober and tractable, now turned, as he said bitterly, into disorderly rioters.

Suddenly he quitted his vantage ground as a watcher, impelled by his boiling wrath, and entered the school-room door, with blazing eyes and head erect.

There was no mistaking his indignation, his righteous indignation!

The ushers who had undertaken to conduct the ticket-holders to their seats, fell back from his fierce looks, awed by him and them. But Mr. Hilhouse took not the slightest notice of any of them.

He advanced up the room with his eyes fixed upon the stage. The piece was coming to a satisfactory conclusion—that is, the first piece—which was the *pièce de résistance* of the evening. The farce was yet to follow, and to be acted by altogether another team.

The lovers were just reconciled, and they chanced to be Marion and Mr. Gresham, and the girl was firmly clasped in the curate's arms, while he was bending over her, pressing very real kisses upon the pretty flushed face.

This was the "hugging" that Dr. King's small medicine boy had spoken of so feelingly, and with so much admiration; and it sent the angry blood surging fast through the veins of Marion's father, as he remembered the boy's words, and saw what good cause he had had to utter them.

Right in front of the stage he halted.

"For shame, Mr. Gresham!" he cried, in a hard, stern voice. "Prompter! drop the curtain; I will not allow this shameful spectacle to proceed in my schools!"

And his words were followed by a sudden silence, and utter cessation of sound within the building—that ominous, awesome hush, which precedes a storm.

CHAPTER XX.

"WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK."

WHEN Marion Hilhouse heard her father's voice, she turned such a white, startled face upon him, that there were few among the audience who were not sorry for her.

It seemed as though a thunderbolt had fallen in their midst, and silenced them. The prompter flew to the cord to lower the curtain, so imperious had been the command; then hesitated, feeling Mr. Gresham's eyes fixed upon him, and stood irresolute.

The "curate in charge" was the only person present who did not seem disconcerted. He looked calmly at the Rector, and continued his part, without the loss of a word, and supported the trembling girl at his side with a strong arm; while he sent an encouraging glance to one and another of the actors, who were assembling by the slips, from the back of the stage, for the finale, and "tableau."

Mrs. Charlton was an able seconder in the unlooked-for and disagreeable situation; but "Aunt Mary Ann" bolted from the stage, absolutely bolted, and was seen no more.

Mr. Hilhouse stood still regarding the scene. Once again he shouted to the prompter to drop the curtain; but another look from Mr. Gresham stayed him, and the scene proceeded to the end, certainly not with the same spirit as it would have done, had the actors in general not had that condemnatory figure standing before them, but with *verve* and pluck, upon the part of two of the company, at any rate.

Then the curtain descended with a rush, the prompter glad to obey both his masters.

A burst of applause rose from the audience, but Mr. Hilhouse faced them, and angrily ordered them to cease, and the expression of satisfaction was hushed.

Then the Rector walked into the green-room. Marion stood there in her pretty stage dress, given her by Elsie Charlton; all her brightness gone—a scared look in the gazelle-like eyes.

He had not seen her for six months, but he had no greeting for the poor girl.

"Come home!" he said, and nothing more, as he took her roughly by the arm.

She cast an inquiring glance at Mr. Gresham, who whispered to her to obey her father; and she extended her hand and reached her hat and wrap from the peg where they hung, as one who walked in a strange, dreamy sleep.

Mrs. Charlton went to the Rector's side, and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Don't be hard upon Marion, Mr. Hilhouse," she said, softly. "She is young, and of course she has enjoyed it. I see you are angry with her; but if fault there has been, it does not rest with her, but with her elders. Miss Hilhouse has in no way objected to her acting, and as for me, I see no harm in it whatever—so blame us, and not Marion."

But for once the widow's wickeries were thrown away. Mr. Hilhouse refused to hear the voice of the charmer. He was in no way pleased with Mrs. Charlton.

He had an inkling of the truth in his mind that she had been the cause of his son's refusing to listen to his wishes as regarded the union he desired to see between him and Rose D'Arroy; and now he found her encouraging Marion in what he deemed wrong behaviour, both by precept and example, and he repented him that he had given permission for free intercourse between them.

"My daughter is fully aware of my views, and my wishes, Mrs. Charlton," he returned, coldly. "As a woman of the world you would not of course regard matters in the same light as I do."

"I acknowledge the soft impeachment," answered Elsie, with a smile. "No doubt I am a 'woman of the world,' but nevertheless I hope you will not have cause to consider me a worldly woman. As for poor Marion, she has only done what she was asked to do."

"If she really did not know my views, she could have written to consult them," he answered, crossly.

"Well, I understood that your sister was to undertake the information and 'consultation department,'" laughed the other. "Come, Rector, promise me not to be hard on Marion!" and she lifted her grey eyes beseechingly to his.

He wavered for an instant, but was too obstinate not to stand his ground.

"I will call on you to-morrow, Mrs. Charlton," he said; "this is no place to discuss private matters. You mentioned my sister; where is she?"

"Did you not see her on the stage?" inquired the young widow, wickedly.

"Unfortunately I did," he answered, in a sepulchral voice. "My faith in her is a thing of the past, and yet I thought she was the salt of the earth."

"Well, she has very much improved since you saw her, Rector; she has grown quite

amiable to what she used to be, although I am not a favourite of hers, and never was."

"No, you never were," he agreed in an irritating manner, which however in no way annoyed Mrs. Charlton, and turned away to look for his sister, but Miss Hilhouse was nowhere to be found.

In one second there had stood in array before her, all she had done and left undone, of those things concerning which she well knew her brother's views.

She had ever leant upon him as the head of her family, and as such had venerated him—until Cupid, or vanity, or love of power, or some strange imp of mischief, had made havoc of the old Aunt Mary Ann, and in her place had substituted a very different sort of old party indeed, and one of whom she was well aware her Rector brother would most heartily disapprove, and she was fairly afraid to meet the room in his cold, grey eyes; so, as was before stated, she had boiled!

"Where is Miss Hilhouse?" he inquired, but no one could answer the question, for she had made her escape before the actors had left the stage.

Then his eyes fell on patient Marion, who stood waiting for him, looking very much as though she were going to her execution.

She was alone; no one stood by her to take her part, or protect her from her irate father, except Elsie Charlton, who had been doing her best to turn the current of his anger aside from the girl.

Mr. Gresham was moving about from one of the late actors to another, making himself generally pleasant and agreeable, congratulating each and all, in subtle words, upon their performances, as best he could fit in his compliments to advantage.

"Marion, are you ready?" asked Mr. Hilhouse, in a tone which was far from encouraging; then he continued, in a voice loud enough to be heard by all,—

"Mr. Gresham, I shall not require your services any longer, I shall not leave my parish again; you have altogether betrayed the trust I placed in you."

"Pardon me," returned the younger man, his only sign of annoyance being that he was even paler than usual. "Pardon me, but you have no right whatever to interfere with me! I am not a curate here, but a curate in charge, and I have your letters to prove that you gave me full license to do whatever I deemed necessary in your absence. I have done what I considered right and necessary, and you descend upon me like a human avalanche. Had you been a younger man, I should simply have put you out of the schools. As it is, you have given me the entire charge of the parish for two years, and have no right to interfere with me or my actions in any way. If you are not satisfied, you can refer the matter to the bishop, or I will do so. Good-night!" and Mr. Faulkner Gresham walked decidedly away, leaving the Rector in a state of black anger.

"You will hear more from me to-morrow!" he shouted after the retreating form, and left the green-room by the outer door, followed by Marion, whose heart seemed to have sunk out of her body, so weak and faint she felt.

All the way home he never spoke to her, and they entered the Rectory in silence, Miss Hilhouse having in her fright and haste left the hall door open.

"I want your aunt," said Mr. Hilhouse at length, as he stood in his own dining room, and Marion went to seek her, but nowhere was she to be found.

Her looked bedroom door, however, told its own tale, that she was within, as did the lusty snores which greeted Marion's ears. But the girl thoroughly questioned whether her aunt's sleep was real, for never before had she got into bed so quickly or snored so loudly.

One thing was quite certain—that she did not mean to be disturbed that night, and that she thus proclaimed herself to be asleep; and Marion announced the fact to her father.

"Asleep! nonsense!" he replied, angrily. "You are shielding her, and playing into her

hands!" and with determined steps he ascended the stairs, and knocked at his sister's door, at the same time calling upon her by name.

A year ago Miss Hilhouse would have started from her bed at the sound of her brother's voice had she been dying; but now she snored on determinately, as though the seven sleepers had taken possession of her.

In vain he hammered, in vain he called, she was alike deaf to both; and, tired of knocking and shouting, the irate master of the house descended the stairs to vent his anger on gentle Marion; while Miss Hilhouse lighted again the candle she had extinguished, and wrote to Mr. Gresham, entreating him to shield her from her brother's wrath, and asking him to inform Mr. Hilhouse of the relations existing between them, before she saw him, so that she might have courage to face his reproaches and indignation. Nor did she omit a very loving signature, far more affectionate than any she had ventured upon before, for she felt now the time had really come, when she might assert herself, and take up her position as Mr. Gresham's affianced wife.

And, having finished her letter, she listened and listened until the servants returned, when she crept noiselessly from her room, and gave it into the hands of the parlour-maid, begging her to let Mr. Gresham have it the moment he came in; and the girl, who liked the curate, promised to sit up and give it to him.

In the meanwhile, poor Marion was seated opposite to her father, who wore his very blackest looks.

"What is the meaning of all this masquerading?" he asked, angrily.

"I am sorry you are vexed with me, father," answered Marion, timidly. "I did not mean to do wrong; but neither my aunt nor Mr. Gresham thought there was anything objectionable in my acting, and, of course, it was a pleasure to me."

"Marion! Marion! the human heart ever was black and deceitful, indeed. You found it a pleasure to be clasped in the arms of a strange man! I tell you it was a gross impropriety!—very gross!"

"Oh, papa, do not say that! Mr. Gresham is not a stranger! Indeed—indeed, we are very fond of one another; and he would not lead me to do wrong, I am sure," she faltered.

"Very fond of one another!" he repeated, in anger. "What shall I hear next? Do you mean to say you are engaged to this young man? That is the only excuse you could offer, to in any way cover such conduct, which, even then, would be highly improper—highly!"

"Oh! do not blame me," she pleaded, her fair face flushing. "Faulkner is too much of a gentleman to do anything wrong or improper, or to tell me to do so."

"Faulkner!" he echoed; "and you have dared to engage yourself to this man without my consent?"

"No, no, papa! We shall be now, I hope, but he would not really ask me to be his wife until he had your permission. He has been very kind and good to me, but he has waited till your return to say it all publicly," and she looked at him with a sweet, shy, happy face.

"Mr. Gresham need not have troubled himself to wait," he answered, coldly. "I have been terribly mistaken in him—terribly! I would never consent to your becoming the wife of such a man—never! So you may dismiss the thought from your mind; and he has behaved like a scoundrel in seeking to gain your affection in my absence."

"Oh, father, he has gained it!" she replied, with clasped hands and earnest eyes. "I love him with all my soul. Pray be merciful to me; I should break my heart if he were parted from me, I should, indeed!" and tears welled to her eyes and dimmed them.

Not one word of sympathy rose to his stern lips—not one feeling of regret for her to his mind. She had disobeyed him horribly, had cast aside all his precepts, and stood before him an unblushing, acknowledged sinner.

"You can go to your room, Marion," he said, harshly. "I will deal with Mr. Gresham, and I desire that you do not leave your own apartment until I give you permission to do so."

"Oh, father, do not send him away! Do not try and part me from him!" she pleaded, clinging to him convulsively. "You do not know what he is to me. I love him more than life, more than anything! If we have done wrong, forgive us, and you will be blessed for your goodness. Oh, dear father! remember the days when you were seeking my beloved mother, and let them speak to you for me and him. Think of those days, and you will understand my feelings!"

"I thank Heaven I cannot understand them!" he returned, fervently. "No right-minded person would indulge in any such violent fancies, believe me. Hush! there is a knock at the front door!"

"Yes, it is Mr. Gresham. Let me open it, and ask him to come in and speak to you."

"Certainly not! Go to your room, Marion, and on no account leave it without my permission!"

And so stern was her father's aspect, that she obeyed him at once, little dreaming that her lover, or the man she considered such, would find no entry to the Rectory that night, or ever again.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHERE THE RECTOR'S HALF-CROWN WENT.

MARION stood within her bedroom door with a wildly beating heart, listening for the meeting between her father and Mr. Gresham; but could not discover that the man she loved had been admitted, and in a short space she felt certain that he had not been, for again and again the knocker resounded through the house, and the pealing of the bell was heard.

How she longed to go downstairs and admit him herself. But the stern command of her father that she was to go to her own room and remain there, was an order she dared not disobey, even though the truth dawned slowly upon her that the Rector would not receive Mr. Gresham back into the house.

Her first thought was for him.

Where would he go?

What would he do without his needful clothes and toilet necessities, and what must be his feelings at such treatment?

Great hot, bitter tears arose in her eyes, that he should be thus unkindly used, and she pressed her hand to her throbbing brow, and paced the room restlessly.

Then the truth came to her, that her father meant to refuse Mr. Gresham's offer, and to dispense with his further services.

She was to see him no more, and he would leave Market Glenton for ever, and she sank helplessly upon a chair.

Mr. Gresham's offer!

Poor girl! there was not one doubt in her mind about the honourableness of his intentions towards her.

She never for an instant doubted his love. Her faith in him was unbounded, and at the thought of his love and his goodness, the sadness died out of her heart.

He was too gentle and generous to blame her for her father's harsh and unjustifiable conduct; and when he got his good living, he would make her his wife, and then she would realise the meaning of the word paradise in its entirety.

She sat with clasped hands thinking of it, and a smile grew and deepened upon her red lips.

After awhile she arose and undressed herself, and creeping into bed, lay for some time listening and thinking—thinking and listening—until every sound died out in the house.

Surely, she thought, her heart full of love and trust, surely Mr. Gresham would now stand between her and her father's anger, between her and trouble and unhappiness!

Yes! her faith in him was perfect.

She felt she could leave all in his hands, without fear or hesitation; and firm in that belief she fell asleep and dreamed of him, and smiled in her innocent visions; for once more his arms were about her, as they had been in the play, and his lips were meeting hers in warm and loving kisses.

In the meantime, Mr. Hilhouse, having sent Marion away, sat in the dining-room listening somewhat sardonically to the knocking of the excluder man, when he became aware of a light footstep in the passage, and thinking that his daughter had disobeyed him, he rushed out, and caught the advancing figure of a woman by the arm, and dragged her into the room, for he had himself extinguished the hall lamp.

It was not Marion, but the parlour-maid going to admit the curate, with Miss Hilhouse's letter in her hand.

As soon as she recovered her presence of mind, she tried to drop the missive in her pocket, but it was a useless attempt to try and deceive the lynx eyes of the Rector.

It was not to be done.

"Where were you going, Jane?" he inquired severely.

"To answer the door, sir; it must be Mr. Gresham knocking."

"Then he may continue to knock. I forbid his entrance here; to-morrow all belonging to him will be sent out of my house!"

The parlour-maid looked at her master in blank astonishment.

"Lor' sir, and he is such a nice gentleman. There's no one in the parish who does not love him; I'm sure."

"So much the worse for the parish to have been thus easily ensnared, and led from the right road. Only six months ago I left them patiently walking in the paths of respectability and duty. What letter is that? Give it to me!"

Jane made a good resistance, but it was all of no avail.

"It is only a note from Miss Hilhouse, sir, which I promised to deliver to Mr. Gresham," she acknowledged.

"From my daughter!" he cried with anger.

"Oh! no sir, from Miss Mary Ann."

"When did she give it to you? To-night?"

"Yes, sir, soon after I came in."

Once more Mr. Hilhouse groaned.

"And she pretended to be asleep!" he muttered, "she absolutely snored. Give me the letter!" he continued, "and tell Miss Hilhouse I will deliver it to Mr. Gresham in the morning."

And the girl left it in his hand, glad to escape; for if there was one person in the world of whom she was afraid, it was the Rector.

She was sorry to leave Mr. Gresham out in the cold, but there was nothing else to do. Her window was too high up to venture her attempting to give him a warning of what was in store for him.

As she ascended the stairs, a thin angular hand was thrust through the open aperture of Miss Hilhouse's door, and beckoned her in, and she stopped and obeyed at once.

(To be continued.)

AN ASSURED FACT.—Paper window glass is now said to be an assured fact. As described: "A window pane is made of white paper, manufactured from cotton or linen, and modified by chemical action. Afterwards the paper is dipped in a preparation of camphor and alcohol, which makes it like parchment. From this point it can be moulded and cut into remarkably tough sheets entirely transparent, and it can be dyed with almost the whole of the aniline colours, the result being a transparent sheet, showing far more vivid hues than the best glass exhibits."

LADY LILITH.

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CHAPTER III.

THE wedding morning broke—not with blue skies and golden sunshine, but rainy—misty—most gloomy. The streets were muddy, and on each side of them miniature brooks of water ran, brown and thick, into the drains. Though it was only the end of August, people shivered as they hurried along under their dripping umbrellas, and made what haste they might to get out of the uncomfortable streets, while indoors a sort of damp clamminess clung to the furniture, and one's eyes went longingly to the empty fireplaces, in which one would have rejoiced to see big fires blazing.

"I never knew anything more unfortunate!" grumbled Lady Lester, coming into Lilith's dressing-room, where the young girl was sitting in front of the toilette table, while her maid dressed the splendid lengths of her golden hair. "Every day for the last three weeks has been perfect, and now, just when we want fine weather, we get it wet and dull, and miserable like this. It is really too annoying!"

"What difference can it possibly make?" asked Lilith, calmly. "I suppose the ceremony will take place just the same?"

"Yes, only instead of being a success it will be a failure. We shall all feel limp and dragged, just like the poor people in the street. However, I am glad you take it so quietly. You are more philosophical than it is in my power to be. Still I must confess the splendour of your lover's wedding presents is sufficient to make you forget everything else."

As she spoke she advanced to the toilette table, where in their bed of purple velvet and white satin reposed the diamonds Lyndhurst had given to his betrothed the night before. They were indeed most magnificent—necklace, bracelets, brooch, and tiara, all composed of gems of the finest water, that even on this dull morning threw out a starry radiance of prismatic colours.

Lady Lilith looked at them indifferently, then with a sign dismissed her maid, and closed the door after her. It wanted two hours of the time fixed for the ceremony, so that she was in no hurry, and she had a question to ask her aunt which she had never before had the courage to put.

The dressing-room presented a scene of picturesque disorder. The chairs and tables were littered over with various costly articles of attire; in a big vase stood the wedding bouquet, composed entirely of white orchids, and on the couch lay the wedding dress, a wonderful combination of white brocade and magnificent lace, and pearl embroidery. Thrown over it was the veil, and from beyond its mist-like folds peeped the tiny white satin slippers, also embroidered with pearls.

"Oh," exclaimed Lady Lester, glancing round and noting all these things in their turn, "what a happy woman I should be if Marcella were in your place at the present moment!"

Lilith smiled with an impatient contempt. This wealth of which her aunt thought so much, did not affect her in the slightest possible degree; indeed, she scarcely even thought of it.

"Look," she said, holding out a letter; "I received this from my father this morning, together with a lovely set of pearls and sapphires, which he had ordered to be sent to me. The letter is expressed in tenderest language, and my father wishes me every happiness, and tells me that he often thinks of me; and that my welfare is his dearest earthly consideration. How is it, then, that during all these years he has remained in India, and made no effort to see me?"

Lady Lester looked slightly embarrassed, and it was a minute or two before she replied.

"There are reasons why he does not like England, and so he remains in the East."

It was a singularly unsatisfactory answer, and both she and her listener knew it.

"What are those reasons? They must be strong ones, seeing that they have induced him to desert his only child."

"They are strong ones, but I cannot tell them to you, because I am bound by a promise not to divulge them. As to deserting you—well, he confided you to my care; and Heaven knows I could not have taken more trouble to get you happily married if you had been my own daughter!"

"No, I am sure you could not." Lilith came over to her aunt, and kissed her with a new and strange humility. "You have been very good to me, and I hope I am grateful; but sometimes—" her lips trembled—"I feel that if my father had been with me I should have been happier. It seems unnatural for him to keep away for so many years. Do you think he will ever return to England?"

Lady Lester shook her head.

"My dear, how can I tell? I should imagine that after this length of time it is very improbable he will ever settle down at home; but one never knows, and nothing that my brother Paul did would surprise me."

"You have never spoken to me of my mother," observed the girl, in a thoughtful tone; and Lady Lester made a little impatient gesture as she answered,—

"Why should I? She died long before you can remember—when you were a tiny child of two years old."

"And was it for grief at her loss that my father left England?"

"Yes," said Lady Lester, slowly; "it was for grief at her loss, partly. But why do you talk of these sad things on your wedding morning?"

"Is it not natural that I should speak of them? I was thinking that, perhaps, if my father had always been with me my life might have been—different. It seems so strange to telegraph to him the news of my approaching marriage, and then for him simply to write congratulations. There is something a little unnatural about it."

"Not when you consider my brother's character. He was always different to other men; and, as I said before, I should not be surprised at anything he did. But—there! It is time for you to be getting dressed; and, going to the window and looking out anxiously, "I do hope that before we go to church we shall see a scrap of blue sky!"

Her hopes were doomed to disappointment. The rain never for an instant ceased falling, and the clouds grew, if possible, more gloomy.

The person least affected by the weather was Lilith herself, who allowed herself to be dressed, but did not exhibit the least interest either in her garments, or the appearance she presented when they were put upon her.

Surely a more lovely bride never stood before an altar—or a colder!

All the day she had been conscious of a strange, dream-like feeling—a feeling of being somehow out of herself, and only a spectator in the drama now being enacted.

She wondered vaguely whether she would break down when the eventful moment actually arrived, and Lyndhurst placed the ring on her finger; whether anything would occur to prevent the ceremony, for even now she could not realise that in an hour's time she should be his wife!

But nothing did happen to prevent the marriage; and, although she was white as the blossoms that crowned her hair, her responses were given in a firm, clear voice that, low as it was, was yet distinctly audible.

Lyndhurst himself was much more agitated. His happiness was so great that he could not measure it, could only vow to himself that no husband could be truer, no lover more devoted than he would be to her. The effort of his life should be to make her happy.

After the ring was on her finger, and she had signed her maiden name—for the last time—in the register, she walked down the aisle, her eyes veiled by thin, drooping lashes;

but, on nearing the door, some impulse induced her to raise them, and they rested on the face of a woman who was bending eagerly forward, as if with the desire of seeing the bride.

She was tall and slim, but the black lace she wore over her face was too thick to permit even a glimpse of her features, though a careless knot of fair hair was visible under her bonnet at the back.

Lilith immediately recognised her as the same woman who had so often watched her window at home, and was a little disconcerted at the encounter. The feeling was but momentary, however, for in another few seconds she and Lyndhurst had left the church and entered the carriage waiting for them at the gates, and all remembrance of her strange visitor had passed from her mind.

"I trust this is the beginning of as happy a life as is permitted to us mortals, my Lilith," murmured her husband, putting his arm round her, and kissing her with passionate fervour.

She shivered a little, and drew back, as if his kisses hurt her.

They were the last he gave her for many a long day!

Then followed the breakfast, the speeches, the goodbyes, as she stood in her plain grey travelling dress, and after that the going away, followed by a shower of rice, and white satin slippers.

Lyndhurst had of course secured a compartment to themselves, and as soon as the train moved off Lilith sank back wearily in her corner.

"I am tired," she said, closing her eyes, "I shall try to sleep."

Her husband arranged her cushions, and did his best to secure her comfort, then seated himself opposite, and feasted his eyes on the white loveliness of his wife, who—although she was not asleep—never once raised her richly fringed lids, until Dover was reached.

It was not a pleasant journey. Rain was still falling, and the landscape, seen from the misty windows, looked blurred and indistinct. It was cold too, with that damp chilliness which often accompanies rain, and Lyndhurst found himself involuntarily shivering once or twice.

He was glad when Dover was reached, and they were walking across from the station to the Lord Warden Hotel, where they were to stay the night, and where apartments had been already secured.

"I am afraid you are very fatigued," he said to his wife, as she sank into an armchair, and threw back her mantle. "Perhaps you would like a cup of tea before you change your dress for dinner?"

"Yes. If you will ring, my maid will get it for me."

"I will order it myself," he returned, with tender solicitude, "and then you will get it without delay. I will be back in a few minutes."

He left the room, but, oddly enough, did not shut the door, and Lilith, who had a curious dislike to sitting in a room with the door open, got up to close it.

As she did so, she heard the sound of a man's voice in the corridor—a voice she knew, which sent the blood from her heart to her cheeks, and made her stand before the open door in a sort of catalepsy, that took from her the power of moving.

And while she stood there, silent, immovable, a handsome man of about thirty walked rapidly along the passage, coming to a sudden surprised pause at the sight of the beautiful girl in the doorway. Then her name burst from his lips.

"Lilith!"

And before she knew what he was going to do, he had sprung forward and seized her in his arms, showering kisses on the lovely throat and brow and hair—calling her by every endearing name in Love's vocabulary.

"Hush!" she exclaimed wildly, tearing herself from him, and holding out her hands

to keep him away. "You must not do this—you forget who and what I am!"

"I forget everything, save that I am in the presence of the only woman, who has power to make my heart beat one throb faster—the only woman in the world whom I have ever loved!" rejoined Sir Horace Dalton, passionately. "I know not what has brought you here, when I was on my way to you as fast as steam could carry me!"

"On your way to me!"

"Yes!" By this time they had both drawn further into the room, for Lilith was too bewildered, too deeply agitated to think of after consequences. "The time has now come when I am free to claim you, to redeem my promise, and make you mine—mine for ever! Ah, Lilith! if you knew how long and miserable the hours have seemed since we parted—how I have dreamed of you by night, longed for the sight of your sweet face by day! But the probation is over at last, and now—now we will be happy!"

Again he tried to embrace her, and again she repulsed him.

"Where is the woman you are engaged to—the American heiress, Miss Recuero?"

He looked at her curiously out of his deep blue eyes, and a slight change came over his face.

"Ah, you heard that false report!"

"I saw it in the newspapers," she returned coldly; "therefore I knew it could not be false!"

"And yet it was! Miss Recuero and I were friends—nothing more, and it was one of her rejected suitors, who, out of pure malice, caused the announcement of our betrothal to be publicly circulated. It has been contradicted; but I have really paid little heed to it, for since then my uncle has been dangerously ill, and last week he died. I only stayed for his funeral, before starting for England. And now, Lilith, I am a rich man, for my uncle has left me every penny of his large fortune, and therefore I am able to claim you for my own! There is another point which must be cleared up between us, and that is my long silence." He dropped his voice to a still lower key, and drew a little nearer. "Doubtless you wondered that you did not hear from me, as I wondered I did not hear from you. Since my uncle's death the matter has been explained, for I found half a dozen of my letters to you amongst his papers, and so it is clear that somehow—I know not how—he must have prevented them being posted, for he was aware of my love for you, and was determined to thwart it if he could. One must not speak ill of the dead, Lilith, but he has caused us both much unhappiness. However, it is all over now—the long dark night has departed, and the dawn is come! The future shall more than redeem the past by its sweetness, my own love!"

And then, despite her struggles, he forcibly drew her to him, and just for one moment, spent with emotion, Lilith lay passive on his breast, in a half-fainting condition.

It was at this moment that Lyndhurst returned.

CHAPTER IV.

For the space of a few seconds Lyndhurst neither spoke nor moved; the sight of his few hours' bride, in the arms of a man whom he was quick to recognize as Sir Horace Dalton, was so utterly unexpected, so inexplicable, that it left him absolutely petrified with rage and astonishment. Then volition came back, and with an inarticulate cry of anger he sprang forward, seized Lilith with his left arm, while with the right he dealt the Baronet a blow, which, strong man as he was, made him stagger backwards, and catch hold of a chair for support.

"Lilith!" he said, fiercely, putting her from him, and speaking in short, quick gasps, that testified to his emotion; "go to your

bedroom, and remain there while I demand an explanation of this man."

For a moment Lilith wavered, subdued into obedience by his anger, then her resolution came back, and drawing her stately form to all its magnificent height, she said, defiantly,—

"I shall not go away. I grant your right to an explanation, but I will be present while it is given."

Lyndhurst turned from her with a quick gesture, that might have meant scorn or impatience, and confronted the Baronet, who, pale as himself, faced him with an equal amount of anger.

"And you, Sir Horace Dalton—you see I know your name—tell me the meaning of your presence here, and your attitude with regard to that lady!"

"My attitude justifies itself. That lady is my promised bride."

"What!" Lyndhurst looked from one to the other, then laughed a strange, mirthless sort of laugh. "Your promised bride! Why, man—she is my wife!"

"It is a lie!" cried the Baronet, hoarsely.

"It is Heaven's own truth. If you doubt me, ask Lady Lilith!"

"Is this true, Lilith?"

She bent her head without speaking; she was incapable of speech. A dozen emotions, all keenly vivid in their intensity, held her a silent spectator of this scene, in which she nevertheless played so prominent a part, and for a little while Dalton himself spared her silence, staring stupidly at the plain gold band that encircled the third finger of her left hand, while, pale with hardly suppressed wrath, Lyndhurst watched them both in turn.

"Now, Sir Horace," he said, at last, controlling himself with a strong effort, "you will acknowledge my right to demand from you an instant retreat. My wife refuses to leave the room, and it is not in her presence that I can give you my opinion of your conduct."

"My conduct cannot be impugned. It is yours that will not bear looking into!" rejoined the Baronet, with haughty resentment. "By some means or other—falsehood and treachery—you have stolen my betrothed bride, for I can trust her too well, to believe that it was of her own free will she threw me over."

He looked at Lilith as he spoke, and she returned the gaze with an almost answering passion in her eyes. Lyndhurst, who saw the glance, grew yet paler—white to the very lips. An idea of the truth was coming to him—slowly, but surely, and it brought with it an intolerable shame.

"You were engaged to this man?" he said, turning to her, sharply.

"Yes."

"I never knew it—if I had—things would have been very different! My God!"

The exclamation was wrung from him in spite of himself. He set his teeth together, and his eyes grew wilder; then, with a desperate force of will he regained command over himself.

"Leave the room, Sir Horace! I will remind you that these apartments are mine, and your continued presence is an insult which I refuse to endure. I have no wish to use force before Lady Lilith, but you must not try me too far!"

There was a dangerous gleam in his eyes, and Sir Horace, who had measured his rival's strength, decided that he himself would be as a mere babe in the hands of this man, with his athletic frame and iron muscle. His best plan would be obedience, so, with one more lingering glance at the pale young wife, he slowly passed from the room.

As the door closed behind him, Lady Lilith sank back in her former attitude on the couch, her husband standing before her, stern and accusing.

"How was it neither you, nor your aunt, told me of your engagement to Sir Horace

Dalton?" he asked, and his voice had a ring in it that Lillith had never heard before—a *masterful* ring. In this short time a great change had come over him. He was no longer the adoring lover, anxious to anticipate her every wish, with no desire save her pleasure, but the pitiless husband, determined to assert his authority even on this their wedding day.

"My aunt was not aware of the engagement," Lillith returned, slowly. Whatever her other faults, she was at least truthful; and now that he knew so much it seemed better that he should know all.

"Then it was a secret one?"

"Yes!"

"For what reason was it not made public?"

"Because the uncle of Sir Horace, old Lord George Leatherstone, wished him to marry a cousin, and he was afraid to offend him by announcing his intention to marry me."

Lyndhurst's lip curled with fine scorn.

"I see! So he made a convenience of you, and you were content to await his good pleasure. A very proper arrangement, supposing you to be possessed of no self respect!"

A deep flush stained the marble pallor of Lillith's face. She moved uneasily amongst her cushions. She had never regarded Sir Horace's conduct exactly in this light before.

"He had debts," she murmured, "and he could not marry me while they hung round his neck. His uncle had promised to pay them, and—"

"He determined to let his uncle keep his promise, and then disregard his wishes!" said Lyndhurst, finishing her sentence for her, as she hesitated.

"Really, I must congratulate you on this fine sense of honour displayed by your former lover. There are very few men who would prove themselves so able a diplomatist!"

Again Lillith winced, even while she experienced a certain wonder at this satire on the part of one upon whom, in spite of their relations to each other, she had looked down as heretofore inferior. She had agreed to marry him it is true, but it was to suit her own convenience, not because she thought that he, the son of a common working engineer, millionaire though he might be—was on the same level as herself, Lady Lillith Desborough, only daughter of the Earl of Austerhope!

"I think," she said, haughtily, "you may spare your critiques on Sir Horace Dalton. Remember, he has done you no wrong, although you—"

She stopped. Something in his face warned her not to go on.

"Why do you not continue?" he asked, with a mocking smile. "Were you going to add that I have done *him* wrong? If so, let me remind you that the wrong was purely involuntary, and committed in ignorance. If I had only been enlightened, you may be quite sure I would not have robbed him of his bride." He ceased speaking, and stood for a few seconds immovable, and apparently lost in deep thought. When he spoke again it was in the same icy tone. "Even yet I do not fully understand this position. Perhaps you will be good enough to inform me, why you did me the honour to marry me, since you make no attempt to conceal your preference for another man."

She answered him defiantly—scorning to conceal one atom of the truth.

"I married you because I did not wish to pose before society as a jilted woman. Everyone knew that Sir Horace had paid me attentions, and nearly everyone suspected what our relations were towards each other. When the false news of his engagement was bruted about, people were *pitying* me, and so I resolved to give them the lie."

"Headless of the man you sacrificed, while you did it!"

Her proud gaze fell. Then, ashamed of her own shame, she said, quickly,—

"I did not sacrifice you! I told you on what conditions I would marry you, and, by accepting them, you removed the responsibility from my shoulders."

"Wait a minute. I don't think I quite understand you. Conditions! I never heard of any."

"Then either you are not telling the truth, or my aunt deceived me," Lillith said, after a pause. She looked in his eyes, but they met hers with a steadiness that never faltered, and her tones grew less assured. "Did not Lady Lester tell you that though I was willing enough to try and make you a good wife, I wished it to be clearly understood that I had no love for you—that our marriage, so far as I was concerned, would be one of convenience, not affection?"

"Certainly not! Good heavens!" he exclaimed, with a sudden burst of passion, "what manner of man must you think me, if you believed I would submit to such a humiliation—cast my manhood to the earth for you to trample upon! If I had known this, nothing—nothing should have induced me to lower myself by marrying you!"

Lillith sprang to her feet, and faced him angrily. In spite of the well nigh tragic nature of the situation, she could not vanguard her pride sufficiently to bear his recrimination in silence.

"You speak of *lowering* yourself by marrying me! You forget yourself strangely, Mr. Lyndhurst. It is I, not you, who have done that. I, Lady Lillith Desborough, who have deserted my rank in order to take the name of a man sprung from the class—"

"Which works for its daily bread!" he interrupted her, contemptuously. "Yes, I admit that, but I was thinking of man and woman as God made them, not of the artificial distinctions which the world confers. To me wealth and title are nothing—less than nothing; and if you had been a labourer's daughter, I should have wedded you as proudly as though you were a princess of blood-royal. Perhaps in that case," he added, with a bitterness he could not control, "I should not have found you in the arms of another man, a few hours after I had placed the ring on your finger!"

Hot, shamed blushes rose to her cheeks, her eyelids drooped; she could not hide from herself that there was justice in his taunt, and she grew eager to exculpate herself.

"I acknowledge you have a right to be angry for—that!" she said, vaguely, "but it was not my fault. I had no idea of meeting Sir Horace, and when I saw him I was so hurried away by his vehemence, that I had no time to think—"

"Pray do not trouble to make excuses, I am not blind, although my conduct since our engagement might justify you in believing me to be so. It seems to me that I have been out of my senses, and have only just recovered them. However, I see plainly enough now, and if the sight is disagreeable, why—I must teach myself to grow accustomed to it. I must think over the situation, and decide what is best to be done under the circumstances—a strange occupation for one's wedding-day, is it not?"

She did not reply, and he began pacing the room, his hands clasped behind his back, and his eyes fixed on the ground in gloomy meditation. She didn't venture to interrupt him; but, strangely enough, instead of giving way to the grief, which she might otherwise have felt, at the thought of how cruel Fate had been to her, in letting her believe the news of Sir Horace Dalton's engagement, she found herself following her husband's movements with the keenest anxiety—waiting with almost breathless impatience, for the next words he would say.

As for him, he was trying his utmost to crush down his overwhelming sense of misery, and being a strong man he succeeded. But the bitterness was worse than that of death. He had loved her so well, trusted her so implicitly, looked forward to a future spent with her, as men look forward to Paradise—and lo! the fruit that had been so beautiful in anticipation, turned to dust and ash, between his lips.

How long he continued his restless paces, he could not afterwards have told, but Lillith's suspense grew intolerable. It seemed to her that she must go mad, if he did not cease them soon.

At last he stopped before her, his face white and stern, his eyes dark with repressed pain; when he spoke his voice was much gentler, though still very unlike his usual tones.

"Terrible as is our fate, it has one redeeming point," he said, "and it consists in the fact of knowledge having come to me when it did. Our marriage is an accomplished fact which nothing can alter, but we may still so order our future, as to escape with as little amount of humiliation as possible. I presume you agree with me in desiring no scandal?"

She assented by a movement of the head, and waited breathlessly for him to proceed.

"That being so, we must live together, and not let the world suspect that we are different to other married couples, but, in reality, we can live separate lives, and each go our own ways without reference to the other. You shall be the mistress of my house, and you will have to bear my name; but otherwise I shall be no more to you than the veriest stranger. I shall not interfere with you, so long as you remember that you have my honour in your keeping, and I shall expect the same amount of liberty myself. By-and-by, when we get used to it, we may not find the tie that binds us together so galling as we do at present; and, after all, we shall be no worse off than many other married people, whose opposite tempers will not even let them agree to differ!" He laughed bitterly at his own satire. "There will be no necessity, to let your aunt know what has happened. I presume Sir Horace Dalton will keep his part of the affair secret; and, for the rest, it remains between our two selves, so it is not likely to be betrayed. We will proceed to Paris to-morrow, but I do not think, under the present circumstances, it is worth while going further, for I fear that it will be impossible to extract much enjoyment out of our honeymoon."

It is impossible to describe the emphasis which he laid on the last word. There were in it scorn, anger, hopelessness, indignation, and it would be hard to say which sentiment predominated.

"Do my arrangements meet with your approbation?" he asked, presently.

"I am not in a position to do more than acquiesce," she returned, striving to speak naturally. "In your estimation, I have lost the privilege of being consulted."

"Nevertheless, I should wish to make things as pleasant for you as I can. Have I not proved it by promising not to inflict upon you my society?"

She turned away impatiently, wondering why she could not reply to these sneers of his with equal readiness, but somehow the retorts she would have uttered died on her lips. She felt for the first time the full significance of the step she had taken in marrying him—the wrong she had done him.

Thinking only of herself and the saving of her poor, miserable pride, she had inflicted upon him an injury only second to that she had inflicted upon herself; and, so far as human prescience could foretell, it could never be redeemed.

Had any other woman ever such a wedding-day as hers?

CHAPTER V.

THERE were great rejoicing, at Heathcliff Hall, Lyndhurst's country house, when it was known that he and his young bride were coming home. Flags were hung out, triumphal arches erected, and the whole village was *en fete* in honour of the occasion; for Lyndhurst was a very popular landlord, although he had been away so much, and in spite of the fact that the Hall and estate had been bought by his father—who was known to be a self-made man—not so very many years ago.

A contingent of the villagers went up to the station to meet the train as it came in; and afterwards a few enthusiastic young men insisted on harnessing themselves to the carriage, in spite of Lyndhurst's earnest remonstrances.

Three cheers were given for him and the beautiful bride, who bowed her acknowledgments with a certain stately dignity becoming her rank; as she leaned back amongst her cushions, looking a trifle weary, and without a vestige of colour in her cheeks.

People noticed how silent she was, and remarked that she and her husband rarely spoke to each other. Lyndhurst treated her with the utmost courtesy, but it was accompanied by a cold conscientiousness, that is seldom seen between man and wife.

It was curious, too, that Lady Lilith never for one moment lost her look of proud indifference—not even when the carriage drew up in front of the picturesque red-brick pile, with its oaken doors, and scullioned windows, which was henceforth to be her home; and a crowd of servants, headed by the housekeeper, greeted her as she crossed the threshold.

She bowed and thanked them as she swept through their ranks, looking like some young princess in her rich dress, but she did not pause to address a word to them individually; and when the housekeeper showed her her rooms she made no remark on their beauty, though they had all been freshly furnished for her reception, and were as charming as taste and money could make them. There were sitting-room, bedroom, bathroom, and dressing-room, all en suite. The housekeeper passed as she entered the last.

"This was to have been Mr. Lyndhurst's dressing-room, my lady," she said, respectfully; "but directly after you were married he wrote word that his things were to be removed from it, as he would have the rooms on the other side of the passage."

Lady Lilith made no observation, but her delicate cheeks flushed. Lyndhurst had kept his word. He was determined there should be only the merest semblance of friendship between them—in reality, they were strangers.

After the housekeeper had left her, she sat down near the window in the sitting-room, and a strange sense of loneliness fell upon her. How different was their homecoming from the one her girlish dreams—before she knew Lyndhurst—had looked forward to! It was true she was surrounded by luxury; the room was full of statues, and pictures, quaint old Venetian mirrors and Moorish lamps, rich stuffs, and splendid Eastern fabrics. These were all hers, and if she looked through the window, her eyes rested on wide stretches of parkland, wooded with stately trees, under whose branches deer were herding, knee-deep in golden bracken. She was mistress of it all, and yet it seemed to her that the lowliest woman in the county would not care to change places with her!

Lilith was proud, but beneath that pride there beat a heart that was noble, tender, and generous. Faults she had in abundance; she was no angel, remember, only a very womanly woman—but there were also latent capabilities for good, and it was quite possible that she might develop into a grand and lovable character, even under the adverse influences in which she found herself. Possible, but perhaps not altogether probable. Time alone could show.

Her reverie was disturbed by the entrance of her maid, who came to dress her for dinner; and she submitted in silence, while her travelling attire was changed for a heavy, lustrous white silk dress, and thick ropes of pearls were twisted in the gleaming masses of her fair hair, and round her statuesque throat.

As she descended the staircase, and entered the drawing-room where Lyndhurst awaited her, she looked a wife of whom any man might have been proud; but he did not even raise his eyes from the book at which he was

glancing, and when he presently offered her his arm to lead her to dinner, the expression of his face never changed, neither did he seem to notice that her beauty on this evening was even more resplendent than usual.

The meal was a silent one, and dragged its heavy length through eight or ten courses with a weary monotony. And this was a fair sample of the others that followed during the next few weeks. Lyndhurst kept stringently to the programme he had laid down on his wedding-day, never approaching his wife save at meal times, or when he took her out in the evening to the dinners and receptions, that were given in honour of their marriage.

Of course all the great people of the neighbourhood called upon them; for though they looked shyly on the old Lyndhursts, there was no reason why they should not receive his son on terms of equality, especially now that he had allied himself to the aristocracy by a marriage with an Earl's daughter, who was also a noted beauty.

All the county raved about her, and were unanimous on the point of her charms. Men congratulated Lyndhurst on his peerless bride, but he received their congratulations in silence, smiling an enigmatic smile that puzzled them, and changing the subject as soon as he could do so without betraying himself too palpably.

He had lost no time in employing himself after his return home. Some cottages on a distant part of the estate were in a very tumble-down condition; he razed them to the ground, and himself made plans for fresh ones, which were to be let at the same rent, but promised fair to be models of neatness and convenience. Looking after the building operations took him a good deal away from home; and when he was not there he was out shooting, so that Lilith rarely saw him save at dinner.

The loneliness told on Lady Lilith. It was so different from the constant change and excitement to which she had been accustomed, and it left her more time for brooding over her troubles and the past. She grew paler, thinner; and one evening at dinner, Lyndhurst, chancing to raise his eyes to her face, noticed the alteration that had taken place in it since their marriage.

Later on, in the drawing-room, instead of settling himself down in an armchair, with a book, or magazine, as was his usual custom until coffee was brought in, he came up to her. "You don't look well," he observed, and she lifted her eyes in some astonishment, from the embroidery on which she was employing herself.

"Do I not? I was not aware of it."

"Then you don't study your glass very much. Perhaps this place does not suit you?"

"Yes! it suits me as well as any other."

He winced a little at the cold indifference in her voice. She had dropped her eyes on her work again.

"Do you think you had better see a doctor? He might give you a tonic that would restore your appetite, for you eat absolutely nothing at all."

"My appetite is not large at the best of times, and I don't think a doctor would do me the least good in the world. Physically, I am quite well."

He looked unconvinced, and made one more effort.

"Will you go away somewhere—to Brighton or Eastbourne—for a change of air? Sea breezes might prove beneficial."

"Thank you! but I prefer staying where I am. If Heathcliff does not suit me now it will by-and-by, when I have grown acclimated to it, and the sooner I habituate myself to it the better."

He turned away, and said no more; but there was a pained contraction of his brows that she did not see. Every day convinced him more and more, of the folly of which he had been guilty in marrying her—every day impressed him more deeply, with the hopelessness of their situation.

It was not only for himself that he grieved. Sad as was his lot, hers was almost equally so; for now that time had taken off the first keen edge of his anger against her he remembered that she was very young, that she had been brought up amongst the frivolities and artificial shams of the great world of fashion, and that in yielding to the passionate impulse of marrying him without love, she had been carried away by an undisciplined heart; and encouraged by her aunt, who had no idea that she was not acting a mother's part towards her motherless niece.

It was very hard for him to see her fading like some tall white lily in want of water, and feel that, but for him, her fate might have been so different. Not that he believed her happiness would have been secured if she had married Sir Horace Dalton; for he was sufficiently acquainted with the character of the handsome Baronet to feel sure, that it was not in his nature to be true to any woman for long; but she did not know this; and doubtless her thoughts often pictured the sunny future she would have enjoyed, if she had remained faithful to her first love.

The next day it so chanced that Lilith went out for a walk after luncheon, and wandered through the plantation of oaks and beeches that bounded the west side of the park. It was a lovely October afternoon; a mellow crispness in the air, and a faint blue veil of mist hanging over the distant hills—indication that autumn had come. Blackberries were ripening in bunches on the hedges, over which scarlet-berried briony, and the feathery clusters of the wild clematis gone to seed straggled in picturesque confusion, and in the orchards the gold and rosy glow of apples was visible amongst their autumn-tinted leaves.

And yet, in spite of the sunshine, the blue sky, and the soft atmosphere, there was something in the day that breathed of sadness—told of the coming winter close at hand. Lilith felt it and hurried on, determined to walk swiftly, and leave herself no time for melancholy.

After proceeding some little distance she passed close to a farm house that, by reason of its rustic prettiness, attracted her attention, and then she came to a pause, and became conscious that she was both tired and thirsty. She therefore resolved to go up to the farm and ask for a glass of milk, and permission to rest herself for a while.

A low rustic gate with an arch above it, on which a few pale monthly roses still lingered, gave access to a gravelled path, leading up between two flower borders edged with box that lent a certain air of quaintness to the place. In the borders themselves dahlias, and asters, and chrysanthemums were blossoming, and even a few clumps of mignonette remained, breathing out a faint, sweet odour that touched one's senses, as with a breath of the departed summer.

The house itself was long, low, and white-washed, but so covered was it by creepers of various kinds, that very little of the original structure was visible. Before she reached the door it was opened by a fine-looking old man with white hair, and that ruddiness of complexion, which comes from constant exposure to the weather.

"I was about to beg for a cup of milk, and leave to rest," Lilith said, with the smile that came so rarely now. "I have been walking, and I am rather tired." The distance she had come was by no means great, but she was not in her usual health, and it had been sufficient to fatigue her.

"Certainly ma'am—my lady, I mean. 'Tis Lady Lilith Lyndhurst, isn't it?" returned the host, standing on one side and making room for her to enter.

"How did you know me?" she inquired, as she passed through the narrow dark hall, and thence into a room that she felt sure must be the "best parlour" of the establishment—a long, low-ceiled apartment, with a square of carpet in the middle, and a bordering of oak boards, polished to a mirror-like



["I WAS ABOUT TO BEG FOR A CUP OF MILK, AND LEAVE TO REST," LILITH SAID.]

brightness. The furniture was old, and of a long, bygone fashion; but everything was scrupulously clean and bright, and there was even a certain air of refinement about the place visible in one or two books, a bowl of late roses, and some needlework embroidery made into cushions and brackets. "Have you seen me before?" she added, as she seated herself near the open diamond-paned window, through which the scent of the mignonette came wafted in.

"Only once, my lady, but 'tis a face that, once seen, can't be forgotten," responded the old man, with a sincerity that Lilith felt to be more flattering than the polished compliment that Princes had so often paid her.

He left her for a few minutes, and returned bringing with him a glass, and a jug of milk.

"There, my lady! I think you'll find that fresh, and it's good milk, tho' I say it as shouldn't—but my pasture land is as good as any in the county, and my daughter Letty attends to the dairy herself, and is reckoned one of the best dairy-women for many a mile round."

"Are you one of Mr. Lyndhurst's tenants?" asked Lady Lilith, sipping her milk, which was refreshingly sweet and cool.

"Yes, my lady, and I was his father's before him, for I've farmed Woodlowes nigh upon thirty years now, and Letty was born here, when her poor mother died. That's nineteen years this Michaelmas."

"Is Letty your only daughter?"

"Only daughter, and only child, my lady. She's the only creature in the world I've got left to care for, and if anything happened to her Heaven knows what would become of me! Perhaps you've heard your husband mention her, my lady—Letty Redmayne, of the Woodlowes. He told me once that if he was a painter, he should like to paint her portrait."

"No," Lilith said, with a little bitter smile

at the thought of how few confidences passed between her and Lyndhurst. "My husband has never mentioned her to me."

Old James Redmayne looked disappointed. He was so proud of his daughter's beauty, that it seemed to him all the world must admire it as much as he himself did.

"Perhaps he hasn't had time yet! You see you haven't been married such an over great while," he observed, consolingly; "but it's a good husband you've got, my lady—a man as any woman, titled or not, may well be proud of!"

Lilith seemed surprised. There was a curious mixture of freedom and respect in this old man's conversation, but the freedom was involuntary, and never degenerated into familiarity—instead of offending, it amused her.

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it, my lady. There isn't a man in all the county more looked up to, and respected than Mr. Colin—we still call him Mr. Colin, my lady, because, you see, we used to call his father 'Mr. Lyndhurst,' when he was alive—always ready to do whatever repairs you ask him Mr. Colin is, and if you've had a bad year, if the wheat hasn't turned out well, or the hay crop failed, you may be sure he'll return you part of the rent when the time for paying it comes round. High and low—everybody has a good word for Mr. Colin Lyndhurst."

Lilith listened with a curious admixture of feeling to these praises of her husband—the husband who was as far away from her, as if oceans had divided them. It had never before struck her to think of him as good or bad, and this revelation of the esteem in which he was held came upon her as a surprise.

Just then the gate at the bottom of the garden fell to with a click, and old Redmayne started at the sound, and looked through the window.

"It's Letty come back from her walk—Letty and the young man she's engaged to, Stephen Brooks. He's an engineer, my lady, and he's off to Scotland to-night to take a good situation in Glasgow, as manager of some works there. If he gets on well he is going to set up for himself, and then I expect they'll be married. I suppose your ladyship would not care to see Letty?"

He said this interrogatively, but there was a half wistful expression in his eyes that seemed to say his disappointment would be great, if his visitor replied in the negative.

"I should like to see her very much indeed," declared Lady Lilith, heartily, little thinking that her meeting with this girl was the beginning of the drama, in which Letty's fate and her own, were to be so tragically interwoven.

(To be continued.)

BEE-KEEPING IN CUBA.—Bees are generally kept in hollow logs from four to six feet in length. As the combs approach the ends of the logs the outer ones are scraped out with a sort of hoe, and placed in bags or sacks, in which they remain until the honey has been squeezed out of them. The honey produced in this way brings tenpence per gallon in the local markets, and the wax, which is worth tenpence a pound, is shipped to Spain, where it is manufactured principally into candles for the cathedrals and churches. The honey produced by the apiaries in which the modern appliances—frames, hives, extractors, etc.—are in use, commands one and eightpence per gallon, and aside from the honey thus produced, very little Cuban honey finds its way into our markets, for the reason that the duty and freight are about one shilling on every pound that goes into the United States.



[SISTER MARY GAVE A SCREAM THEN, FOR HIS ARM WAS ROUND HER WAIST, HIS BREATH HOT ON HER CHEEK.]

NOVELLETTE.]

THE HEIR'S WOOING.

—20—

CHAPTER XI.

ARTHUR NORTH'S marriage was the next event of interest in the North family. The Squire's sons were going off in the matrimonial market quickly. It took place quietly from her home in the early spring. No one was present but her own family, owing to the sudden death of her youngest sister at Rome. So it was not until some months later that she got known to her husband's relations.

Mrs. Arthur North was bright and vivacious, a dark-eyed brunette.

After visiting at Nest Bank she and her husband journeyed northwards. They had pitched their tent near Newcastle.

She had no money until her father's death, and Arthur's income was not large, so they started in married life in quite a small way. Better, therefore, they thought to live away from their friends, not that they minded their comparatively limited means. They were quite happy in their love for each other.

Lady Sybil envied them. Arthur, too, was such a handsome fellow, much like Stanley, only quieter mannered and more principled.

The verdict was Eric's. Lady Sybil rebelled at it.

"I do not think Arthur as handsome as the Captain," she declared, with burning cheeks. "Neither do I consider he is to be compared; though, of course, there is a family resemblance."

"Which I do not possess, eh, Sybil?"

"You are certainly by far the plainest of the lot," she averred with more candour than politeness.

"Ah, well," he laughed, "we cannot all be beautiful. My motto will have to be, 'Hand-

some is that handsome does.' If that is not sufficient to make me happy, I can find satisfaction in my dear wife's sweet face."

She blushed.

"I do not think appearance is—is much," she said.

"I cannot agree with you, love. Be thankful for a pretty face, but don't be vain of it."

"I never shall be that," she averred positively.

"You never will," he assented; "that is such a charm of yours, darling!—I do so admire your unconsciousness of beauty!"

Lady Sybil sighed.

A moment later she smiled in her husband's face. If she had not learned to love him, she certainly had grown to care very much for his companionship, and he was satisfied. As for him, he loved her more than ever, if that was possible.

"When is your mother coming?" he asked.

"Next Tuesday. The Earl and Countess do not leave her until Monday."

"So she cannot come much before," said Eric.

The Countess of Glencorn's visit, however, was postponed. Small-pox had broken out in the neighbourhood, and though she left home, she could not be induced to venture near Lady Sybil for fear of carrying infection.

"I will be on the safe side at any rate," she declared, when some of her friends tried to laugh her out of her decision.

People thought her wise in her generation when, a few weeks later the Squire was laid low with the disease.

Then began Eric's difficulty. All the people in the parish who could afford it fled. Those who were poor kept themselves in their houses. The very servants deserted Nest Bank, and poor Mr. North was left alone. Eric would have gone to his father, but he had his wife to think of. Simon, the footman, had the conscience to appear at Norby Hall and tell Eric how things were.

What would the Countess have said had she known?

"The master is likely to die, sir, unless you send some one immediate. Cook would stay, and so would I, sir, if there were a nurse."

Leyland North, who happened to be staying at Norby Hall, entered the room where they were at that moment.

"What shall we do?" exclaimed Eric in distress. "Ley, you are not married! You can go to Nest Bank, and take a trained nurse."

Leyland's face went pale at first, not with fear, but with emotion. He had an instinctive horror of deceit, yet his life at that time was one continual act of deception. Suddenly his countenance grew illumined. He had an idea. Oh, if it could only be carried out, how different would his future be!

"Leave the matter to me!" he exclaimed, readily. "I know a splendid nurse, if I can get her; and I promise you not to leave Nest Bank until all need for my presence is over."

"Thanks!" said Eric, warmly. "You are a good fellow, Ley. I would accompany you, only I fear infection for my wife. Simon will return there, and can get cook to go also. They will have things in readiness for your arrival with the nurse."

As soon as Leyland had departed on his charitable errand Eric hurried upstairs and had a bath. He had his clothes fumigated, and put on fresh ones. Even the room where Simon had been was thoroughly cleansed, and then it was several months before Lady Sybil was allowed to enter it, so careful was her husband of her welfare.

Some hours elapsed after Leyland's departure before Eric rejoined his wife.

"Where have you been?" she inquired. "I have been looking for you." His face expressed pleasure. He was glad to be missed.

He told her of Simon's visit, and his brother's departure.

"Why, Eric!" she exclaimed, "I think we ought to have gone. If I thought I could have

been of the slightest use I should have insisted on it, but I fear I should be rather in the way than otherwise."

"I fear you would, my love," he replied. But he did not tell her how his father had been deserted by every one. It would, he thought, but unnecessarily grieve her. The news of his illness was alone sufficient. Meanwhile, he waited in keen anxiety for a telegram from Leyland. It arrived at length.

"Brought the nurse here safely. Father very ill. Pleased to see us. Rest content, all will be well."

Eric was much more satisfied after receiving that message. If would have done him good could he have seen the reception his father gave the nurse. Exhausted as he was from want of food, as much as from illness, the Squire's faculties were keenly alive. Opening his eyes after a long sleep, they rested as he at first supposed, on a supernatural form. A black-robed figure with a lot of white on her head, the forehead nearly hidden with a broad band. The nurse was, in fact, dressed as a Sister of Mercy.

"Who are you?" he demanded, fiercely, although his voice was low.

"Sister Mary—the nurse."

"Humph! One of those belonging to the Sacred Heart order."

"No! sir. I am of your persuasion. I do not belong to a Romanist sect."

"That's lucky, for I would not have kept—"

A smile from the soft brown eyes.

"Would you not?" she said, gently. "I should have been sorry to leave you. But drink this, sir, it will do you good." He took the cup, and drained its contents.

"I could do with another meal like that," he observed.

"They are starving me. Ring for more!"

"Presently," she replied. "Let me shake your pillow. There, is not that comfortable?"

"What a pleasant voice you have!" he remarked. "I'm sure you have done me good already."

"Most people like my voice," she answered.

"It is so soothing! Talk again, my dear."

"Would you not like to go to sleep?" she asked.

"I'd rather hear you talk!"

"Shall I sing you a little song, or a—"

"A song by all means," he said, quickly.

"But, stay! Where are all the servants—who got you to come here? Why did not—"

"I am afraid you are asking me so many questions at a time," interrupted Sister Mary, with quiet, self-possession, "that I shall forget them all. Please, sir, stay quiet until after the doctor has been."

"Answer me this, then. Have you ever nursed any patients before with the small-pox?"

"Many," she replied, with a smile.

"How dare you?"

"I am almost small-pox proof," she said.

"But even had it not been so I trust myself in higher hands, and—"

"All for money," interrupted the Squire.

"Not so—for the good of the cause. I do not need any pay, I assure you."

The doctor's entrance put a stop to further conversation. Dr. Rainford was truly thankful to find such a capable person in charge of his patient. He was at his wit's end to get any of his patients properly attended to. Most people, however, luckily had relatives to attend to them. The Squire's case had been the most neglected.

"You are worth your weight in gold," said Dr. Rainford, enthusiastically.

"More if she saves my father's life," observed Leyland, who stood by.

"I will do my best," declared Sister Mary, simply.

"We shall save him, then," said the doctor.

But the Squire grew worse after that. He tasked the nurse's strength. Leyland took it in turn with her to sit up at night, and at last Mr. North began to mend. Then he took it into his head to keep Sister Mary with him. She read or sang, and he could not bear her

out of his sight. If Leyland had not gone to her rescue she must have broken down. The tax on her strength would have been too heavy. But he was untiring in his efforts to spare her.

A day arrived when the Squire was able to sit up in his room. He began to realize then more fully what his nurse had done for him.

"I never can thank you enough," he declared, with a husky voice. "And I suppose I never shall be able to give you enough to repay you if I give you the whole of my fortune."

"Money would be valueless to me," she said.

"I have wondered several times how you would look without that disfiguring head-gear," said the Squire, with sudden abruptness. "I saw fancy you are quite pretty, that is, judging by your eyes and mouth."

Sister Mary for once lost her self-possession, and grew quite flustered.

"I am—not—at all pretty," she declared.

"My—my—voice is my sole attraction."

Somehow the Squire did not credit her assertion.

"Let me see for myself, my dear."

Still the nurse hesitated.

"Are you under any vows to keep that hideous thing on?" asked the Squire.

Sister Mary was too truthful to take refuge under an untruth.

"No—it's not that—I—"

"Well, oblige an old man's whim, then. I have always, somehow, looked upon you as a young woman. Am I mistaken? Take off that toggery, and let me see your face properly."

Seeing there was no escape Sister Mary at last yielded, and reluctantly drew off her veil.

An exclamation of admiration burst from the Squire. A girl, young, with a face of bewitching beauty, stood revealed, not a startling nor a common beauty either, but with calm, brown, velvety eyes, soft as a fawn's, that looked different when hair in luxuriance fell round and matched them. Though evidently quite young, barely twenty, the peace and serenity of her countenance were marvellous. Sister Mary's features were more like one of heavenly mould. Her mouth in its sweetness was perfect.

"You told me you were not pretty?" blustered the Squire; "you said your voice was your only charm."

"I am sure I thought it was so," declared the girl—"only one person ever told me that I was pretty, and he—well he was a partial judge."

"Then you have a sweetheart, my dear? You do not intend to go on nursing all your life?"

"I mean to give up nursing after I leave you," she answered in some confusion.

"I suppose it would be no use an old man like me making you an offer? There are advantages in it. If you would be my wife."

"Oh, no, no," she exclaimed in distress.

"Oh! please don't think of me that way."

"Well, will you have one of my sons?" interrogated the Squire generously.

"There are only two—there is only one that is worth having, only one decent son left. If Leyland cares to repay the saviour of his father's life, and he could not get a prettier wife, he may have you."

"But—but—" began Sister Mary.

"Oh, you won't have him? You decline him before he has made you an offer? You are very independent, young lady," laughed Squire North.

"I am not a young lady, sir. My parentage is humble."

"If you are not a gentlewoman—I'll—I'll eat my head," said the Squire, in desperation for words. "I know a lady when I see one, that's certain, and you quite fulfil all the requirements necessary for that fastidious article."

Sister Mary's serene eyes grew bright with excitement. Her lips parted.

"You really mean it?" she interrogated.

"Mean that you are a lady? Of course I do."

A happy smile shone on her lips.

"And you mean that you—that you will—?"

"It is unusual with you to be perturbed, my dear," observed Squire North complacently, "but I suppose it is the natural consequence of an offer like mine."

He had spoken all along half jokingly, in a bantering tone that was habitual to him when in a good humour; but when he saw the girl's agitation over it, an idea entered his head seriously of making her his wife.

She was young, with an original and bewitching serenity of prettiness, her speech and actions were those of a lady. She would be an acquisition to Nest Bank. True, he would rather have preferred her for a daughter if he could have had it so; failing that, however, he saw no reason why she should not be his wife. Other old men besides he had taken unto themselves young wives and been happy, why not he? He was getting lonely by himself at Nest Bank. Yes, he would seriously try and get her.

"Come here, my dear," he said genially. "I have a suggestion to make. I should like to repay you for your bravery in coming to nurse me when every one else fled—I am very grateful. I—"

Sister Mary's flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes were raised to the Squire's expectantly.

"I think you deserve a substantial recognition, and I will make it this way. It is no small honour to be mistress of Nest Bank. Will you be my wife and sign over it?"

There was no mistaking his earnestness. Sister Mary's face had fallen, however. A blank look replaced her former expectancy.

"No—no—no," she exclaimed in distress.

"Oh, please do not think of such a thing—I—I—"

What further she might have said was interrupted by Ley's entrance. He looked from father to nurse, interrogatively. Neither spoke, and a minute later the girl fled from the room. Leyland followed her just to say—

"Have a nice walk on the lawn; it will do you good. I will stay with my father until your return."

He spoke aloud, so that the Squire might hear as well, for nothing irritated the old man like whispering did. Sister Mary replied in the same audible voice, "Thank you," and pursued her way.

CHAPTER XII.

SQUIRE NORTH regarded Leyland's entrance as a most *mal apropos* interruption; but instead of resenting it by blustering, as was his usual habit, he—perhaps as a result of his illness, observed only a sulky silence. Leyland's efforts to draw him out were for a time not crowned with success. At last he hit on the right tack.

"You will soon be yourself again now, father," he said, "and then you will need a change."

"Who says so?" demanded Mr. North abruptly. Leyland was rather taken aback by the tenor of the question. It was a fact so apparent to every body.

"Oh, I do! Dr. Rainford does—Sister Mary—"

"Has she—has Sister Mary said so?"

"Not in so many words, perhaps, but of course she is aware that after an illness such as you have gone through change of air and change of scene are desirable."

"Umph!"

"I suppose Sister Mary will—will—"

"Whatever are you stammering and stuttering about?" queried the Squire testily.

"I suppose she will be expecting to leave any day, now," observed Leyland, his manner full of emotion.

"Leave! what the deuce should she leave for?"

He wheeled his chair round and faced his son defiantly.

"I believe it is usual for a—a nurse to relinquish her patient when he is convalescent."

"Tut, you believe, indeed! Are you anxious to get rid of her?"

"No, father, only Sister Mary can have no excuse for longer remaining."

"Has she another case to go to?"

"It is not that, but—"

"I wish, Leyland, you would mind your own business," broke in Mr. North, intemperately. "Nurses go out on hire. I am willing to pay Sister Mary for her services. I like her—her society is agreeable—moreover—"

"But, father," interrupted Leyland in confusion, "suppose Sister Mary has a home. Suppose she is wanted there—per-haps money is not a sufficient attraction to keep her closely confined a prisoner to an invalid's room."

"She is not confined to an invalid's room. Besides, what difference can it make to her whether she is in mine or someone else's? She has her living to make. It is just possible that she may make it more easily here than she will elsewhere."

"That is not likely," declared Leyland, folding his arms.

"You wish to get rid of her. You have got tired of seeing her engaged in making my hours fly quicker."

"You wrong me, father."

"You want to send her about her business, and leave me desolate."

Leyland looked up quickly in amazement. He seemed trying to read his father's countenance.

"But you will be baffled. I do not care for any of your sneaking objections. You are all too proud—the whole lot of you. I admire sensible pride, but this bombastical—ridiculous—absurd—"

"Whatever are you talking about?" interrupted Leyland.

"Oh, we don't understand now; we are blind. It suits us; but I'll open your eyes. I have taken a fancy to this Sister Mary. I cannot say I love her, because I suppose love at my age is a myth, perhaps; but I like her. She is agreeable to the eye, pleasing to the ear, and a very desirable companion. I know you and your brothers won't like it, of course not, but she has saved my life, and I mean to let her have the benefit of it. She shall slave no longer at nursing this person and that. She's too bonny, so I'll marry her and bring her here. As for you lads, if you don't like it, you may do the other thing, and go your own way. I'll marry her if she will have me!"

Leyland drew himself up to his full height. He was tall ordinarily, he looked taller then. His father mistook the action.

"Ah, you can be very fine and mighty," he said; "but I am master. You shall be made to be civil to my wife."

A singular smile shone on Leyland's face. "I am the last one to need any making," he said. "And now, father, if you will listen, I will tell you a short tale."

"What has that got to do with Sister Mary?"

"A great deal. Wait and hear."

"Before you begin, tell me this. Do you think I can induce that nurse of mine to be mistress of Nest Bank? Most people in her position, you would think, would jump at it, but she—dear, what's that?"

The Squire's room windows were both open. They looked on to the side of the house just at the corner. A loud scream sounded distinctly in the air; it was Sister Mary's voice. Leyland recognized it, and was off like a shot. The Squire yelled out,—

"Run, run!"

Leyland needed no urging. He flew as if for his life. But when he got outside he saw no one.

"Ruth, Ruth!" he called, hurriedly running round the corner.

"Ruth!" reiterated the Squire, who caught the name. "Who the dickens is Ruth?"

"Ruth, Ruth!" shouted Leyland, standing

and looking about in perplexity as to which direction he should take.

"Leyland, where are you?" answered Sister Mary's voice. "I am in the Lovers' Walk."

"Is Sister Mary called Ruth?" cogitated the Squire. "That sounds strange. Leyland and she speaking to each other, too, in that friendly way. I thought he seemed in a hurry to get rid of her. I must have been mistaken. Yes, evidently he calls her Ruth. Well, I never!"

The last few words were extorted from the Squire in the heat of passion.

"For all cool faced pieces of impertinence," said Mr. North, fuming, "command me to my son's. There's a Leyland takes that girl into his arms—she dies there as if for protection, and he only too readily receives her. She raised her face—I could not have believed it if I had not seen it—and he deliberately kissed it. She is agitated, upset, I suppose. She must be by the way she is taking his hand and leading him to the Lovers' Walk. I daresay she is a schemer, like half the women going, and she gave that scream on purpose. But I should not have thought it of her—I should not, indeed, nor of Leyland. I daresay he is another Stanley. Oh, what is the world coming to? Sister Mary as mercenary as the rest. Heigho! I wish I had gone on being deceived by her, for I liked the girl."

Poor Sister Mary had not done anything to forfeit the Squire's goodwill, though appearances were certainly rather against her. When she first started out she made for the shelter that was always known at Nest Bank as the Lovers' Walk—a sheltered avenue formed by a walk on the right hand, and by overhanging trees on the left. It was a favourite spot with nearly all the Norths, and very retired. Sister Mary liked it on that account. It was, moreover, within hearing of the house, though that thought had never struck the girl, for as far as solitude went, it might, under ordinary circumstances, have been in a desert. Once down the pathway and back and Sister Mary removed her head gear, tossing it off with a light-heartedness, and sending it on to a branch some height up, as if she had done with it for ever.

A quick walk then, leaving it behind her, and she forgot all about it. She had no fear of anyone disturbing her there, simply because there was no one save the gardener or the house servants to disturb her, and it was highly improbable that they should go that way. But as she turned to go back Sister Mary observed that her cowl was gone. The wind must have blown it away, yet there seemed scarcely a breath. She peeped on to the lawn; it was not there. She stepped back to the Lovers' Walk, but could not see it! Where had it gone?

She began to be uneasy, for she did not care to venture into anyone's sight without it. The next instant she was more uneasy still—she was spellbound, frightened! It could not be fancy. No, she was sure there were two dark eyes looking at her from behind the shrubs. Still, she would not give way. It might only be a gardener, or—her thoughts were stopped by a crackling among the bushes—the person was moving. Sister Mary hastened her steps. Drops of perspiration ran down her face, and by the time she reached the entrance to the Lovers' Walk there was a tall gentleman standing there before her. She was too agitated to notice him much. The only glance she gave towards him struck her as being familiar. What she was wondering was, "Could it have been that man whose eyes had glared at her so through the shrubs?" She attempted to pass by.

"Not so fast, young lady," he exclaimed. "I want to have a word or two with you."

Sister Mary's heart beat, but she only said—

"Any one who wishes to speak to me can do so by coming to the house—Nest Bank—and asking for me."

"Pretty creature!" was the reply. "I have

some property of yours; give me a kiss, and you shall have it. I never expected to find beauty hidden in this place."

"You are insulting," she said, drawing herself up. "Allow me to pass."

He only gave her an admiring glance. It angered her. She darted back; he was as quick, and got before her.

"Pretty angel!" he said; "don't be offended. Here is this disfiguring nun's cowl, or whatever you call it, and I—"

She gave a scream then, for his arm was round her waist, his breath hot on her cheek.

"That unladylike shout," he declared, "will rouse the house; but they'll never mind, because you are only a hireling. No one will come."

And he coolly kissed her several times.

Sister Mary was almost too indignant for words.

"I don't know who you are," she said, with intense quiet scorn, "and I don't care; but this I can tell you, you cannot insult me with impunity. I am the wife of one of the sons of the house, and not merely a hireling, as you suggest."

She was arranging her displaced headgear all the time she spoke.

"Now, I would thank you to let me pass," she said.

"A word. Don't mention this meeting when you get in. Leyland, I see, has married to some purpose. Tell him so. As for that dolt Eric, I suppose his wooing has not yet really begun. I apologize if I offended you." He added the last hastily, for Leyland was calling wildly.

Sister Mary's only answer was to shout back, and then to run to meet Leyland.

"What has frightened you?" he interrogated, as she fell almost fainting into his arms.

"A rude, horrid man, looking like a gentleman, has persisted in kissing me," she answered. "Oh, hurry, Ley! Come, love, and reprove him! I shall never dare go down that walk again."

There was no one to be seen when Leyland got there. It seemed hard to believe that anyone could have escaped so quickly, and without leaving a trace. He was not in the shrubs, not at the far end of the walk. In fact, he was not in sight anywhere.

"Are you sure you were not mistaken?" asked Ley.

"As if I could be nearly frightened to death by nothing!" she replied. "It was a gentlemanly looking man, rather shabbily clothed, and your style, Ley. Why, he might have been you only for an affected way he had of speaking; and he called you by your name. He said something about Eric too. As for that dolt, he said, 'I suppose his wooing has not yet really begun.'"

"Why, it would be—it must have been Stanley. I should liked to have seen him, poor fellow! He is in low water, I fear. But if so, he'll come back, and we had better go and explain to father. He has been left an unconsciously long time alone for an invalid."

"Oh! Ley," exclaimed Sister Mary, with sudden recollection, "what if he saw you kiss me? His room faced our way, and—"

"Ah! well, it is time now to tell everything and cast ourselves on his mercy. He would see us. I don't know but what it is all for the best. My father likes you very much. We have prospered beyond our expectations in one respect; yet, in another, I do not see that we are any better than we were."

Leyland was alluding then to his father's desire to gain Sister Mary for himself.

"Oh, but we are a very great deal better!" dissented she, briskly. "You should have heard him praise me before you entered the room; and he said I was quite a lady!"

"That is not everything," said Ley, gloomily.

"Oh! Ley," she exclaimed reproachfully, "that was all you cared for when we first started on the undertaking. It looked such a gigantic business then, and now I think it is nearly all settled."

"You have behaved beautifully throughout the whole time. There is the greatest credit due to you," he said warmly. "My father owes you a large debt, and whether we succeed or fail, we shall have to be content to take things as they come now."

"We shall," she acquiesced, her tone as serene as ever.

"As long as you are satisfied, I shall be, Ley."

Leyland felt very far from satisfied. He was magnanimous enough, however, to confess that if she was unsuccessful in her mission, it was not for lack of perseverance and courage, however.

"We must speak out openly to my father," he said, as they neared the Squire's room. "No more secrecy, and no longer any more deception."

Yet it was somewhat singular that the words that kept echoing in his brain, as he entered his father's presence, had nothing to do with the object near his heart. They had reference to his eldest brother.

"What could he mean?" commented Ley; "As for that dolt—(Stanley always despised Eric)—his wooing has not yet really begun. That was it. I must confess it is Greek to me. The heir's wooing, I conclude, was finished when he won his wife. But Stanley was always deep, his words ever contained much that required studying. We shall find there was a lot of meaning in his remark, 'that Eric's wooing has not yet really begun'; that is, taking it for granted that it was Stanley who uttered them. I wish I had seen him; but, of course, if it was Stanley, he will soon show up again."

CHAPTER XIII.

WHILE thoughts to that effect were flying with rapidity through Ley's brain, Sister Mary began to quietly busy herself throughout the room.

"You must have some beef-tea," she remarked to the invalid; "and then, perhaps, you would like a nap? Should the windows be kept open, or will you have them closed?"

She spoke hurriedly, and very unlike her usual self.

"Leave the windows open," granted the Squire; "they're truthful enough at any rate. No humbugging about them; and as for beef-tea, I should like that if you have finished your kissing."

Sister Mary's face went crimson.

"We all have been young in our turn," interposed Ley. Father; you must not be hard upon us. If—"

"Is this young lady's right name Ruth?" interrupted the Squire brusquely.

"It is Ruth North."

"Bless my soul," exclaimed Mr. North, excitedly, "she is a relation! I thought she was a lady. I said so. I—"

"Father," burst in Leyland, anxious to have the truth out at all costs, "I met this young—young lady two years ago, and fell in love with her. I had an accident, and she nursed me through it."

"It seems to be the natural sequence to nursing to fall in love," said the Squire. "Not that I did that exactly. Well, you fell in love, and why have you been so shy over it? You quite took me in with your long face. Just fancy, listening as you did to my twaddle and never confiding in me one word! Oh, hang all you young men! we old ones beat you into fits with openness and frank candour."

"I believe you do," acquiesced Ley readily, "but—"

"Oh, Mr. North," broke in Ruth impulsively, "you must not be angry with us! We have been trying to win your good-will for some time. Ley has educated me, and—"

"You never needed educating," asserted the Squire.

"And now, I know no accomplishments, and—"

"What do you call the art of nursing well? Is not that one of the greatest accomplishments? Ah! well, the long and the short of it is, you want my consent. I will give it on this condition, that you and Ley make this your home. I have taken a great fancy to you, young lady, and would like to see you about my house. Ley took me in so absurdly, that I saw no way to get my ends but by marrying you myself. I was willing to do that sooner than to sacrifice losing you; but I must confess a dear daughter-in-law will suit me better than a wife."

Ruth went and kissed the Squire.

"I am so grateful to you!" she said, humbly. "You are so good!"

"I am good to myself, *c'est tout*. Well, I'll go away and get well, and you shall go on your honeymoon. Then we will meet here again, and you shall be mistress of the house."

"It is too late, father," said Ley, impulsively. "We kept our honeymoon fifteen months ago. I made—Ruth will forgive me—what the world terms a *malalliance*, and—"

"Ruth is no Sister Mary, then?"

"Not a bit of it. She is my dear wife, and my little Gwynned's mother."

"Who is Gwynned?"

"Your baby granddaughter."

"My granddaughter? Fetch her at once! Do you mean to tell me there has been a girl born to the House of North, and it has been kept a secret from me? Fetch her, I say!"

"We cannot do that, because we shall have to take every precaution to keep the small-pox away from her. She is a dear little mite, and—"

"But what you left her for mystifies me. Unnatural parents, to both forsake a little girl. If it had been a boy, now, it would be different!"

"You forget," said Leyland, gravely. "It was a hard struggle, but you were not to be lost. Besides, we wanted to reconcile you to our match, and we—"

"I do not see what there was to reconcile me to. I should only have been too proud to have welcomed Ruth. There," as she clung round his neck, "we have good days in store. And where is my granddaughter?"

"She is with Ruth's mother—a poor, but respectable widow. Ruth is anxious now to see her child, so, with your consent, dear father, we will leave to-morrow, and you can go with Simon to the sea."

"But you cannot go straight to my granddaughter," declared the Squire.

"We should not think of doing so. But a week at home, and—"

"I tell you what," suggested old Mr. North, in the fulness of his heart, "Ruth deserves a substantial repayment at my hands. Suppose you go with me for a week, then go home to prepare for the return of your youngster. I'm sure she is pretty, with such a couple of parents. I shall be all anxiety to see her, bless her! And to think of your hoodwinking me about her all this time!"

"We did not know you would take such a sensible view, father," declared Ley.

Neither would the old Squire have listened to reason if he had not been won round. None tougher in opposition than he; yet, managed properly, as Ruth had managed him, and he was as wax in the hand. Leyland began to regret losing much valuable time in winning his father.

If he had only known he need not have paid such a high price for reconciliation to his marriage. Thus he argued, and foolishly, instead of congratulating himself highly on success that could have been gained no other way.

"Then it is settled," said the Squire, "and in a fortnight's time I shall see Baby Gwynned. Now for some food. I must hasten to get quite strong."

He had not finished taking it when Leyland, who had left the room, appeared in the doorway, and tried to quickly attract the notice of his wife. She saw at last, and nodded. Luckily, the Squire sat facing the window,

otherwise nothing would have quieted him but he must have been in the conversation.

"Now you take a little nap," said Ruth, as she put the cup down. "I will leave you for a few minutes."

She had hardly left the room when Mr. North shouted after her. A fresh idea had entered his head. He wanted her to send cook and Simon to him, that he might explain to his own satisfaction how it was he allowed his daughter-in-law to wait on him like a hireling.

"We'll have the whole complement of servants back, new ones—not those jades that deserted me—and they shall be taught to look upon my son's wife as their mistress."

Then he called Ruth again, but she and her husband were shut up in the dining-room discussing a telegram, and never heard him. It was from Eric, and ran,—

"Come immediately. Important business. Farm you might take. Meet me at Bodley Junction at 9.45."

"Just what you wanted, Ley," exclaimed his wife. "Are you hesitating about going?"

"I must confess I am," he replied. "There are several things about this telegram that strike me as singular. In the first place, Eric dreads the infection from this small-pox for his wife, therefore he would scarcely choose to meet me."

"But he names a station some distance from home."

"True. But why such haste over it? A letter would have done as well. I don't think"—deliberating—"I shall go. Besides, with our prospect now of living with my father we shall not require a farm."

Ruth looked wistful. She preferred a smaller house of her own and independence.

"I cannot see, Ley, why you should think there is anything singular in your brother's telegram," she observed. "To me it is the most natural thing. What should be his motive in sending?"

Leyland bit his nails—a habit he had when in perplexity.

"If I go there will be no need to upset my father about my absence, Ruth. A little thing worries him now, and the house is rather unprotected."

Ruth laughed. Her nerves were strong.

Simon and I could carry on a siege against an army of thieves," she said; "that is, supposing any dare come."

"Moreover," mused Leyland, encouraged by his wife's practical views, "no one will know that I have gone for the night."

Still, reason as he might, there was a presentiment of coming evil on him such as he never remembered feeling before. Yet he would not believe in it. He tried to think his nerves must be upset by being so long confined to Nest Bank by his father's illness.

"I will get someone in to sleep—two of the gardeners if you like, Ruth."

She laughed at the idea.

"I cannot think what has come over you, Ley," she said. "You never used to be so absurd. All that I object to in the matter is deceiving your father."

"Tell him, then," said her husband.

This Ruth did, and the old Squire was interested in the affair.

"Though I did think that Eric worshipped that young wife of his too much to risk taking the infection near her," he observed, grimly.

"And about the gardeners sleeping here?" queried Ruth.

"My dear, it is too late to think about it now," answered Mr. North, looking at the timepiece.

"They have left an hour since."

"Will not one of them come to see after the frames and the fire?" asked Ruth.

"Scarcely, I should say. But send Simon now, my dear, to undress me. He and I will protect you safely enough, never fear."

Ruth rang and rang. No Simon appeared. At last cook came with a very swollen face (she was suffering from toothache) and con-

feared that some boy had fetched her husband on a message.

"It were more than an hour ago, and I expect him back every minute," she said. "Perhaps he have gone round by Ramsden's to get me some oil of tar. I told him to."

"What right had he to stay out like this?" demanded the Squire, wrathfully. "He thinks because he stayed here when no one else would that he can do as he chooses. Send him upstairs directly he comes in. I'll enlighten him."

Cook began to cry. What with her tooth-ache, and its intolerable pain, her anxieties about her errant husband's absence, and now the Squire's wrath, it was more than she could stand.

"Let me help you, sir," she urged. "If sister Mary—"

"If Mrs. Leyland North you mean," broke in the invalid, angrily. "This is my son's wife, and I'll have you treat her as such."

Poor cook dropped a curtsy, murmuring,—"No offence, sir, I see sure."

"Go down now and wait for that ne'er-do-weel. I can undress myself, but I have a few directions to give him before we retire for the night."

Simon, however, did not return. What had kept him no one could guess, and when it was really realised that he could not be coming, there was no messenger to despatch into the village to either inquire after his delinquencies, or to fetch anyone else.

Ruth would have thought but little of the affair, only that each fresh circumstance served to impress her husband's fears on her, and had it not been too late she would have preferred to have had assistance in. She even went quietly to cook to see if she could induce her to go for someone. She found that worthy matron sobbing and crying in bed.

"I only wish as Simon 'ad this precious tooth in his 'ed," was the burden of her cry. "I could not wish him a worse thing, the unkind wretch! He might have brought me the oil of tar, instead of which we shall in all probability be turned away to-morrow without any characters."

"If you'll dress and go into the village to Barton's, and ask him and his brother to sleep in Mr. Leyland's room, I'll use my intervention with your master to-morrow," urged Ruth.

"I dare ha; besides, you don't know Squire."

"Well, we may be robbed. I don't like the look of things," admitted Mrs. Ley, candidly. "There's my husband fetched away with a telegram. There's your husband coaxed out by a messenger. It may be only a singular concatenation of events, but I do not like it."

Cook fairly sobbed.

"You go and fetch some one, ma'am," she said, when she could steady her voice.

"You forget I am unacquainted with the place."

"Then, ma'am, I'll go if you will accompany me."

Ruth deliberated. But it was no go. She, and the only servant in the house, would not be justified in leaving the master alone, even though he might be asleep.

"We can only do our best," she decided. "I suppose you have looked up everywhere?"

Cook could give no answer. She was too overwhelmed with pain and fear.

"Don't leave me, ma'am!" she cried, as Ruth prepared to go downstairs.

"Your best plan would be to sleep in my husband's room," declared Ruth. "I shall be in the bed put up for me in your master's dressing-room, so we shall all be near. Before I retire for the night, however, I shall go and have a close survey. Then we can do nothing more but trust for safety. Probably we are nervous about nothing."

Cook begged the young lady not to go. It might be dangerous, and there was no need. But after seeing the frightened domestic down on to a lower landing, Ruth carried her candlestick in her hand and prepared to examine

all the bolts on doors and windows on the ground floor. Some were fastened. Some had been left undone. Once or twice slight sounds disturbed her, but she went boldly on. In the pantry her heart suddenly failed her; she thought she heard footsteps, and then she fancied she caught voices whispering. She decided she must have been mistaken, for on standing still, listening with strained ears, there was no repetition of it.

The alarm had unnerved her, however. She dared not proceed any farther. There was a bolt outside of the kitchen door. She glided to it and slid that in, then she flew upstairs.

One peep at the Squire, he was sleeping peacefully. She placed his brandy-flask on a small table at his side, lowered the lamp and passed into her own chamber.

There she sat and contemplated the exact position she was in. Physically brave though she was, she trembled at it. A frightened domestic and an elderly invalid gentleman the sole defenders besides herself of that large and desolate mansion.

No house within a distance of certainly more than a quarter-of-a-mile, entirely without firearms, or any weapon of defence, Ruth shivered as she thought of it. Somehow she had grown so firmly impressed that an attack would be made on the place, that had she possessed a thousand pounds she dared have bet it all on the fact. But everything remaining perfectly quiet she undressed.

"I may be wrong after all," she commented, growing calmer. "Ley's fears and then Simon's strange disappearance have helped to upset me. I think I will lower my lamp and get into bed. I can rest if I cannot sleep. But I do wish Ley was at home again; the burden of responsibility weighs heavily upon me."

CHAPTER XIV.

RUTH'S head was scarcely on her pillow when she became aware of a peculiar grating, rasping sound.

She was out of bed in an instant. Carrying her lowered lamp with carefully-shaded hand into the Squire's apartment she placed it on the drawers there.

Then she tried his door. It was quite fast. Unluckily the bolt to her own room was insecure.

She secured a hairpin in that, and then softly opened her window. Not a sound was there to be heard outside, and it was too dark to see.

Gradually she got the sash wider and wider open, and leant out. All seemed profound silence.

Could she have been mistaken? It was very singular. She could have sworn she had heard the sound of people breaking in.

Suddenly a loud barking was set up by a dog in the stables. Why, oh, why had she never thought of that animal sooner! What a safeguard of protection it would have been! Was she too late to slip out for it now?

She sat nerving herself to the task. If there was anyone on the premises, and they caught her, they would in self-defence kill her, she knew.

"Prince would never bark in that furious way without a cause," she argued. "I hope he will not waken his master. If I could only get to him without being seen I would defy a score of them under his wing. I—"

Her communings were brought to an abrupt conclusion by hearing a voice—it sounded so near that at first she thought it was at her shoulder, say,—

"Curse that dog; he will spoil all! I wish we had brought him a strong dose!"

"Let him bark away," was the cool retort—Ruth was sure she had heard the voice before somewhere—"he can do no harm. Simon is locked up in the boat-house, and Leyland is fuming away in Bulay's keeping by now. We have 'em all safe. The villagers are a dense lot of stupid; besides, if Prince barked him-

self hoarse he'd never make one of them hear."

"But, Stanley," remonstrated the other, who seemed a more fearful and less courageous spirit, "if—"

"Have done with your Stanleys; I am Smith here. But what are we resting all this time for? If it had not been for your cowardice when that pretty little creature came peering about with her candle you would have captured her instead of bolting, and leaving her to fasten us in the kitchen. So ridiculous of you, too, when you knew she was unprotected. If I'd been there in time I should have stopped it."

"It was not my doings, but Sly Bill's," answered the other, sullenly. "He is gone home now, and there is only us two. We can manage, I suppose. But what is to be done with the nun?"

"Leave her to me. She spurned me haughtily enough this morning. She might have been a queen instead of a peasant. I—"

"Are you going to harm her, because I—"

"Leave her to me; but for goodness' sake break in. I am getting tired of being outside here."

All the time during the above conversation Ruth had sat as if numbed with fright. Her fears had not been groundless, after all.

A worse fate than any she had anticipated was threatening her. Leyland had been duped, Simon treacherously decoyed out and fastened up, and all by—ah, in that lay the sting!—by a son of the house.

Stanley was at the bottom of it. That fact alone would be enough to cause Mr. North's death.

It was more than sufficient to freeze the marrow in Ruth's bones. Common marauders would have been bad enough; but Stanley, with his wits, his education, and his lack of principle!

The girl clasped her hands together in pain at the thought.

"Get on quickly! What a bungler you are!" snapped Stanley.

"We've got all night, and I am new to the work if you are not. Nothing but desperation would have induced me to come here."

"And a perfect conviction of safety," sneered Mr. North's third son. "Don't forget to add that all-important factor. None of your considerations affect me. Here am I, a member of the house, ousted from it, my pay stopped, and on the verge of starvation. What is a fellow to do but to take the law into his own hands. I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. If we have a lucky haul to-night I shall—"

"Steal all you can—"

"Don't be coarse. I shall simply take my share of the goods. If a man has children he is bound to support them. I—hark! was that a movement?"

It was. Ruth had moved off the window ledge on to the floor.

"By Jove! the window is open above. A ladder, quick," called out Stanley.

Ruth had been almost too frightened to think up to that moment. The need for action roused her. She closed it and fastened it in an instant; but that was not sufficient. It was only a short respite. She must do more, or else those men would quickly effect an entrance. But what?—that was the thing.

Suddenly, as if by magic, an unforgotten art of hers was recalled. Once she had been quite clever in her way at ventriloquism. Could it help her in any way now? She would try. She dared not open her own window again. How had they found out it was open before? She could not tell. They were invisible to her, only she knew by their voices exactly where they were. They were pursuing their breaking-in again.

Ruth resolved to open one of the Squire's windows; it was rather stiff, and the work of some time to lift it quietly, but at last it was open. Now came the supreme moment.

Could she depend upon her voice? It was ages since she had tried ventriloquism. Summoning all her courage, she put her husband's voice some yards away from the disreputable breakers-in.

"You rogues, where are you? Let me find you. Here Jordan, this way."

"Coming, sir, coming," answered an imaginary "Jordan" in the distance.

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed Stanley, fleeing. "They're back—we are done for!"

Sounds of retreating footsteps caught her ear. Ruth listened with a sort of dull wonder. Had the victory been accomplished, and thus quickly. Quickly, it is true, but not easily. Ruth was bathed in perspiration, and she felt faint, but she pulled the window down, and went and re-opened her own an inch or so.

The Squire stirred. The girl was at his side in an instant. She did trust he would not awake. Then her arm would be paralyzed indeed, for he must be kept in ignorance of any wrong doing, lest the shock should produce another stroke—an event always dreaded by his relations.

Things must be at their very worst before he was therefore enlightened. However, he did not awake.

"Perhaps we shall be safe for to-night," cogitated Ruth. "Yet—ah! there are footsteps again. They are returning, perhaps with additional strength. They will soon find Leyland is not here. What am I to do?"

She looked round the room wildly. It was but dimly lighted by the lamps from the Squire's room, but it seemed to show her enough. She pulled the sheets off the bed, and knotted them together; but when it was done she threw them on the ground.

"If I dare get out by the front," she said, "and could make my way to Prince and Simon, all might yet be well. My heart fails me. I used to think I was brave, but there is more than life in this undertaking. There is honour. However, if that is then back, this is my only chance, and every minute I delay gives them greater opportunity of getting to poor Mr. North. Speed—speed! Oh, for wings—"

The next minute the girl—for she was nothing more in years—was out on the landing. She drew in her breath at the hazardous risk she was running. To a certain extent she was safe, fastened in her own room. A thousand perils might be lurking outside, but she resolved to encounter them. *Ce n'est pas que le premier pas que coûte*, it is said. Certainly the first step requires a greater effort than any after. So Ruth found.

There were obstacles, and they were heightened by the darkness, but at length they were overcome, and she stood trampling outside the front door, it having snapped with a slight click behind her.

Then she knew that she had managed to fasten herself outside.

Stanley and his associate were not far from her. She heard their voices, and a desperate resolve nerved her. They must be in the house long before she returned if she could not succeed in dispersing them for a short period again. Of course it imperilled her safety, but she thought she stood a good chance of escape under cover of the darkness, and she should not send her voice anywhere near where she stood.

Leyland had from long association been tolerably easy to imitate. That time her task was harder. She wished to make them think the Squire was speaking.

Fixing her voice as if proceeding from his bedroom she blustered in a way that at any other time she would have thought impossible.

"The villains! My own son, too, do you tell me? Here, my revolver! You take that, Ley. We'll fire out right and left on the scamps. Give it them hot! They shall have a lesson this night!"

The effect of that speech was inspiring in the extreme to Ruth. Without waiting to see

what steps the two unprincipled men took she hurried along to the stables. It must daunt them for a time, at any rate. But her mode of progress was slow. She stumbled frequently, and got off the footpath. Unaccustomed as she was to walking in the dark it was a sore trial to her getting on. The stables were reached at last. She found Prince chained. He bounded on her and licked her hand with delight.

"Hush, hush," she said, leading him out by the chain. "We must be quiet, Prin. Which way is it to the boat-house? Let me think."

The dog stood passive. He really seemed to understand her. But when they got outside he grew restless and wanted to go quicker than she could grope along.

"Steady, boy, steady," she whispered. "I think we are going right. Oh! for a ray of light. There is no barking now to guide me."

They walked along for some minutes, and then Ruth stopped abruptly. She thought she heard footsteps. She listened. Her heart jumped in her mouth. Some were coming, nearer, nearer; she even caught the sound of voices. She could have screamed loudly in her fright. She tugged at the dog and tried to pull him behind a shrub that she felt near; but he would not be pulled, he strained his hardest to get away. All her fears were that he might bark. Suddenly she stooped, when she thought the footsteps were close, and unfastened his chain from the swivel.

She expected a fierce bark and a scream. None came. There sounded a rushing and a scrambling. No words. What was Prince doing? Surely he did not recollect Stanley and feel friendly disposed towards him! The idea was too dreadful. Ruth nearly fainted as she groped on, her hand held out straight before her. All at once she gave a piercing scream, her hand was clasped in someone else's, and she gave all up for lost.

"Oh, oh!" she cried.

"Ruth, my dear, is this you?" exclaimed Ley's most welcome voice. "My dear, what are you doing? Is anything wrong at the house?"

The revulsion from despair to hope was too great, she fell swooning on the ground.

"Come, come!" exclaimed Ley, "don't give way yet. Rouse, dear, and, bless me, you have nothing but this thin cloak over your shoulders. You'll get your death!"

"And list slippers on my feet," said Ruth, trying to overcome her faintness. "But are we near the boat-house? I was going to release Simon."

In a few words she quickly told her tale.

"You are quite in a wrong direction," replied her husband, quickly. "But, come on. Here, Dene, you will give your assistance if the scamps have got in. We cannot wait to get Simon free, and I scarcely think he would be much assistance. Lean on us both, Ruth, an arm of each; we will drag you."

"But the key," she said, "for the front door?"

"I have it, dear. Let us run. I know every step of the way nearly as well in the dark as by moonlight."

Ruth and Mr. Dene, however, were not as clever, and they somewhat retarded his movements.

But the house was gained at last.

Ruth took care to keep very close to her husband as they got in. They found everything quiet. On reaching upstairs the Squire was sitting up in bed wide awake.

"Something disturbed me a short time ago," he said. "I cannot understand it. I heard a voice just like mine vowing vengeance on someone. Then there was a scampering and commotion as of thieves making off. I could make nothing of it, all, and Ruth sleeps so soundly that I cannot waken her. But what brings you back, Ley?"

"I found I had been summoned to Bodley by a false telegram, father. Dene, whom I met when about half-way there, had but just left

Eric, and he had never sent for me. Some one has been hoaxing us all, you see. But you go to sleep, father, it's all right."

Unfortunately, Mr. North, senior, did not think so. The words, "false telegram, hoaxing us all," roused him completely. He was one who had a strong objection to being outwitted.

"I will have the law," he shouted. "I—"

"Wait a bit, father, and we will discuss the matter quietly. I am just going to have a pipe, and then I will come and stay by you awhile."

It was the only excuse he could think of for escaping to perpetrate a hunt. Mr. Dene and he searched the house high and low, but found no one, neither could they discover that anything had been taken.

"I begin to think my wife's imagination has carried her away," declared Ley, sceptically. "It was my fault for working her fears up to fever heat before I started."

"Then how about your telegram, was that the result of the same cause?"

"That was peculiar," acknowledged Ley.

"I am inclined to take them both together as the deeply laid schemes of some plan," declared Mr. Dene; "and, moreover, if you have no objection, I will stay down here for the night and be on the *qui-vive*. The thieves were started probably by Mrs. Leyland's movements, but not deterred, I fear. Perhaps they are searching for her; and if they know nothing of our return they will make another and more vigorous attack. I will lie quietly on the couch in the dark; and then, perhaps, we can circumvent them."

"I wish we had released Simon; even he would have been a little assistance," said Ley. "I don't half like our position, but I must quiet the father. Then I will steal down to you. Meanwhile, as I have no firearms, suppose I leave you my thick walking stick and this whistle. A good blow on it will summon me at any moment. I will leave my father's door open. It is fortunate Ruth has retired with her fears quieted."

"Keep a look out on her, the villains will be specially anxious for revenge on her. You may be proud of your wife, Ley."

"I am," he admitted. Then he went off quietly.

Neither Leyland nor Mr. Dene knew up to then that Stanley North was implicated in the attack.

Ruth would not have hidden the fact for a minute from her husband, but meeting him with a stranger sealed her lips.

Perhaps if Leyland had been told that his movements might have been more wary.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE GOLDEN HOPE.

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CHAPTER XLIV.—(continued.)

During this week at the manse its inmates had seen no sign of Mr. Anhester. One of the valley labourers had called on the minister upon some trivial errand, upon the fifth or sixth day of the girl's stay, and had seen the maiden herself, but he had gone away without appearing to heed her presence, and Hellice felt few apprehensions on his account. Sandy had paid one or two stolen visits, and had been delighted to find Hellice apparently happy. He reported that Mr. Anhester still remained at the Rookery, that he was both furious and sullen at the escape of his intended victim, that he was sure that she had not departed from the vicinity, and that he employed the valley labourers in a continual search for her. Still, the maiden felt secure at the manse, knowing that the fishermen of the hamlet would risk life in her defence, at the command of their beloved minister, who was himself too old and feeble to protect her by strength of arm.

At the end of the week, Hellice sat on the low step of the open doorway, singing softly to herself, and watching the white sails of the fishing boats out at sea. The morning was fine, and every fisherman living in the hamlet had gone out "to try his luck." The women and children were at work in the cabins, or at play on the beach, and the hamlet looked deserted.

"What a lovely day!" she said, sighing softly.

"It is lovely!" exclaimed Mrs. Locke, who was busy within with ordinary preparations. "You ought to take a walk up and down the road, Hellice. It will do you good!"

"Let her go in the garden, Margery," said the minister, from his alcove. "The road isn't safe for her. The fishermen are all gone, and if that lawless Mr. Anchester should come this way—"

He paused, hearing the rumbling of wheels. Hellice did not stir from the door-step as a carriage drawn by two horses came in sight, but when the vehicle stopped before the gate she arose and retreated into the kitchen, looking out from the ivy-covered window.

There was a man on the box acting as a driver. He did not alight, but looked curiously towards the dwelling. The carriage door opened from within, and the herculean frame of Mr. Anchester was revealed to the eyes of the frightened occupants of the manse. He pushed open the little gate, and before the minister could shut the door, as was his intention, Hellice's enemy stood upon the threshold!

He had altered greatly for the worse during his week of baffled searching. He looked like one in a continual rage. His manner was full of suppressed fury. He stood and looked from one to the other of the group with burning eyes and glowing face, fixing his glances at last upon Hellice.

"So, I have found you!" he ejaculated. "It is war, Miss Hellice. War to the knife—since you have so declared it!"

Hellice paled before his terrifying look, and stepped backward instinctively towards Mr. Locke, who had arisen and stood in the entrance of his alcove.

"That old dotard will not be able to help you!" sneered Mr. Anchester, marking her movement. "I am master here. Your fishermen are gone off to sea. You have only women to call upon, and I fancy that they would not long stand up against that!"

As he spoke he exhibited a small silver-mounted, single-barrelled pistol, the sight of which paralyzed the minister's wife. She sank pale and scoured into a chair, unable to speak.

"You are manly to threaten women," said Mr. Locke, undismayed. "Begone! You have intruded into a private house. This young lady is under my protection!"

"I believe I am aware of that," replied Mr. Anchester, coolly. "Your facts are stale, my good sir. 'This young lady' I intend to make my wife. The ceremony you began a week ago was interrupted. Continue it now if you value your continued existence!"

He presented the pistol menacingly, and Mrs. Locke uttered a loud shriek of terror. Her husband was very pale, but firm, as he responded—

"Kill me if you will. My blood be upon your head!"

"You refuse, then—"

"I do, most decidedly! I would never commit a crime to save my life!" cried the old minister, drawing up his thin figure, and looking like a martyr with his devotional expression and serene upward gaze.

Mr. Anchester hesitated, fingering his pistol nervously. His lawless passions were in uproar. He was tempted to shoot the minister dead at his feet. He had expected to inspire fear. To be defied was almost more than he could endure.

"Die then!" he said, hoarsely, carried away by his mad fury.

He raised his weapon, but, like a spirit,

Hellice glided between him and his intended victim.

"If you fire you will kill me!" she said. "This old man who has befriended me shall not be killed on my account. You shall not make his good wife a widow because of me. Fire, Mr. Anchester!"

She folded her arms calmly, and looked at him with a gaze that thrilled him even in that mood. To fire then would be to kill her. She had interposed herself as the old man's shield, and she would sacrifice herself to save him.

"Very well!" said Mr. Anchester, with a forced and husky laugh. "I'll spare the old man. As to the marriage ceremony, we'll wait for that until confinement has subdued your spirit, Miss Hellice. Mine you shall be. I have sworn it!"

"Your lawless ways won't do in this country!" cried Mr. Locke, with stern emphasis. "You will find that the law will protect us—"

"This neighbourhood is too lonely and uninhabited for me to be greatly frightened by your threats," sneered Mr. Anchester. "I defy you and your laws. I make my own laws—to do just as I please, always and everywhere. It is my pleasure to marry Miss Hellice. I intend now to carry her off where you and your laws will be unable to find her."

He thrust his pistol into his pocket. A moment he stood with flaming face and swelling veins, like a tiger about to spring. He looked towards his waiting carriage, and uttered a peculiar whistle, evidently meant as a signal.

Then, with a quick, unexpected bound, he leaped to the minister's side, tore the shrieking girl from the old man's clinging grasp, caught her up in his arms, and bounded with her to the open gate.

To thrust her into the carriage, to follow himself and close the door, to bid the coachman drive on, were all the work of a moment.

When the minister and his wife aroused from their momentary paralysis, the carriage was fleeing up the road like the wind, and they heard but faintly the screams of the unhappy maiden as she was borne from them.

Hellice speedily felt that there was no hope for immediate escape. The country through which they were passing had no roadside houses for miles. She comprehended that her enemy was in a savage, reckless mood, and that she would injure herself by further irritating him. So she became silent, determining to maintain a constant watchfulness for a chance of escape.

"There, that is better!" said Mr. Anchester, releasing the hold he had maintained about her waist. "You have played me some fine tricks, Miss Hellice, but I think we are nearly even now!"

"Not quite!" replied the undaunted maiden. "You can carry me off, Mr. Anchester, but you cannot compel me to marry you. I am on my guard now against drugs. And you know very well that I am not to be intimidated by pistols or blows!"

"Perhaps starvation may alter your views!" said Mr. Anchester, angrily. "A dungeon may subdue you. I shall try both at all events!"

"What unparalleled devotion! What an exhibition of tender love!" exclaimed Hellice, ironically, recovering her spirit and courage. "You told me one day, you know, that you were ready to die for me. Since I will not accept your offer, you intend, I suppose, to make me die for you! I must say I have read of many plans for winning hearts, but novelists have left out this most unique style of love-making. How many days of dungeon-life and starvation do you think, Mr. Anchester, it will take to make me love you? How many chains and fetters will it take to make me adore you?"

"If you persist in goading me you shall have the trial," cried Mr. Anchester, furiously.

"It seems to me, Mr. Anchester, that you

strongly resemble the Africans," said Hellice. "I have read somewhere of a tribe whose practices are very similar to yours. When a young man of the tribe falls in love with a young lady, he procures a hard club, seizes a suitable opportunity, knocks her senseless, and carries her to his tent. Your style of love-making is so like his that I recommend you to emigrate to that happy country, where you must inevitably feel at home!"

This mocking address completely exasperated Mr. Anchester. He desired to see the maiden weeping and grief-stricken. He could not understand her cool defiance.

"I think you do not comprehend your situation," he said. "Do you know that you are being carried to a dungeon, to harshness, to cruelty?"

"Certainly, since I know that you are taking me!"

"Is a marriage with me worse than the terrors I have pictured?"

"Infinitely. Better death than a marriage with you!" cried Hellice, in a passionate voice. "I loathe, despise, hate you!"

"Yet a few weeks of confinement will tame your proud spirit!" said Mr. Anchester. "What is it keeps up your courage now, Hellice? You are deserted by your lover, cast out by your relatives, suspected of an atrocious crime, or series of crimes! You are poor and friendless. Why is it that you are not cowed and heart-broken?"

"Because I trust in Heaven!" said Hellice, so reverently that her enemy was abashed. "Because I have a hope—a sweet and precious hope—that these clouds will soon clear away, and the sun of happiness will shine upon me again!"

"It never will unless you marry me. Hellice, you have driven me to desperation. You know I love you to madness—"

"I should think so," interrupted the girl, drily. "Let us understand each other, Darcy Anchester. It was Cecile whom you loved in India. You know you did not care for me then. It was Cecile whom you followed to England. You deserted her for your self-interest. You have a belief that by marrying me you will improve your fortunes. In short, Darcy Anchester, you either believe me to be Lady Redwood's daughter, or else you intend to pass me off as such!"

Mr. Anchester started, and turned away his head from the keen glance that read his countenance.

"What nonsense!" he said, gruffly. "Am I incapable of generosity and disinterested affection?"

"Since you ask the question I will answer frankly. I think you are," replied Hellice, quietly.

Mr. Anchester flushed with rage. With difficulty he refrained from striking the maiden. Although she was indisputably his prisoner, she seemed after all to be mistress of herself and him. His roughness and violence affected her no more than if she had been marble. He felt himself powerless, this giant of the laws and sinews, and strangely insignificant before her scornful gaze.

"Since you will not love you shall fear me," he ejaculated. "Fear or love, it's all the same, since you shall wed me!"

Hellice yawned, as if the discussion had become tiresome to her, and leaned back on her cushions. The carriage was proceeding more slowly now, and an idea had entered her head. She pretended to be exhausted, and half closed her eyes, as if about to slumber. Mr. Anchester was persuaded that such was her intention. For some time her dark eyes gleamed brightly from their half shut lids, then they disappeared from view altogether; the long lashes settled themselves upon the dark, bright cheek, and her breathing became quiet and regular.

"She's asleep!" muttered Mr. Anchester.

"What a little vixen she is! No man would have dared to brave me as she did. It will be pleasant to tame her, but I foresee I shall have much trouble!"

Full of satisfaction, he leaned back in his corner, and shut his eyes lazily, made drowsy by the summer heat. He did not sleep—he was too cautious for that—and he was not quite unconscious that Hellice's head was drooping lower upon her breast, that she stirred uneasily, that she gathered her garments compactly together in her hands, and that she finally drooped her head upon the panel of the door, the window having been lowered. He was vaguely conscious of all this, but he attached no importance to the facts. The carriage was progressing, although slowly, the driver was on his guard, and he himself had the quickness of a lion's spring. He had no fears of an attempted escape.

But if he were as quick as a lion, Hellice had the lightness and agility of a panther. Apparently, however, she had no intention of using those physical attributes. She dropped one arm outside the carriage window indolently, as if in the forgetfulness of sleep, and breathed so heavily that Mr. Anchester was completely deceived by her movements.

But suddenly the panther-like alertness came into play.

The little hand outside turned the knob, the door swung open; Hellice, wide-awake, bright-eyed, and with every needed faculty of mind and body aroused to activity, sprang up, and leaped out before Mr. Anchester could raise a hand to detain her.

He followed in swift pursuit. The carriage halted, and the driver sprang from his box.

Hellice cast a quick glance up and down the road. There were no houses within sight. Nothing but bare fields met her gaze. In one direction the road was clear. In the other, the one in which the carriage had been proceeding, she beheld two horsemen coming. To appeal to the protection of these horsemen was her instant decision.

Evading the grasp of Mr. Anchester's outstretched hands, she turned, and ran fleetly along the road towards the approaching men. Her superior lightness and quickness told in her favour. Here, where both were on foot, she had greatly the advantage. It is probable that in a long contest, where endurance would be required, Mr. Anchester could not have failed to win, but here, with the goal in view, his endurance was of no avail to him.

One of the horsemen, apparently comprehending the scene, spurred his steed, and came on like a wild Arab. As Hellice and he neared each other he slackened his speed.

"Help, help!" cried the maiden, hearing the two men, Mr. Anchester and the driver, behind her, and fearing that the horseman might hesitate to befriend her. "Oh, help me—"

Her shriek was changed to a glad cry that came from the depths of her soul. She had reached the horseman's side, had looked up into his face, and had recognised him as the one dearest to her of all the earth.

"Oh, Richard, Richard!" she sobbed, hysterically. "Save me!"

Sir Richard Haughton, for the horseman was he, echoed Hellice's joyful cry. He sprang from his steed. With one hand he gathered his betrothed to his bosom. His right hand he thrust in the breast of his coat, and drew forth a revolver, which he presented at the two men, who had instinctively halted.

"Advance one step further," he said, sternly, with a lightning glance at the pursuers, "and I will shoot you!"

For answer, Mr. Anchester fired his pistol at the Baronet.

It whistled past Sir Richard's ears without doing him any injury.

"Now you are at my mercy!" said the young Baronet, with an implacable sternness that stirred the coward soul of Mr. Anchester to deadly fear. "I hold six shots here. You are unarmed. I am tempted to punish your falsehoods, your treachery, your baseness, your cruelty, as they deserve. Yet why stain my hands with the blood of a reptile like you?"

He paused as the second horseman came up. Mr. William Haughton flushed with joy at

sight of Hellice, yet calm enough to hold a revolver also firmly in his hand.

"You see I am strong enough now to do as I please with you," continued Sir Richard. "I have also suspected your good faith of late. I have suspected that you were concerned in Hellice's disappearance. I came here to rescue her—to punish you. And yet I bid you go! Get into your carriage and drive off unharmed. I leave you to a fate that will revenge Hellice's wrongs sooner or later!"

Anchester saw the folly of contesting the will of his antagonist. Cursing himself for not having been better armed, he crept into his carriage and closed the door. Under the same powerful persuasive as that which had compelled his master's obedience, the driver mounted to his box, cracked his whip, and the carriage rolled away.

And then Sir Richard Haughton, with his stern, proud face, seamed with lines that had been traced by grief at Hellice's loss, but now glowing with the brightness and softness of a glorious sunrise, looked into the pure and loving face of his betrothed.

"Hellice!" he whispered, and his voice thrilled the maiden with ineffable bliss, it was at once so joyful, rapturous, and full of supreme happiness. "Found at last! my darling!"

He clasped her again and again to her breast; he lavished a world of caresses upon her; he rained tears upon her head; and called her by all the tender epithets he had feared never to use again.

"Let me speak to her some time or other, won't you?" asked Mr. Haughton, at last, impatiently. "Give me a chance, Dick. You seem to forget I am here, and that I have human feelings as well as you!"

Thus reminded of his selfishness, the overjoyed lover permitted his uncle to pay his congratulations to Hellice. This he did in paternal style, and then relinquished the maiden's hand, placing it again in that of the Baronet.

"There you are!" he said, briefly, yet comprehensively. "Don't let anybody nor anything come between you again. If you are not happy now it isn't my fault!"

"Oh, Richard, how did you find me?" asked Hellice, all smiles and blushes, the old autumn-leaf bloom in her cheeks, the old, sweet shy light in her bright eyes.

"I found you by tracing Mr. Anchester, my darling! I went to the Rookery th's very day, after Mr. Anchester had left it. A foolish lad told me where to find you. So we came on, arriving just in time to save you from a dreadful fate. Let me mount you on my horse, my darling, and I will walk beside you, while we proceed to the manse. We will talk as we go along. I have much to say to you!"

He raised her tenderly to his saddle, and walked beside her, holding her hand in his. Mr. Haughton rode at her right hand, and thus, lovingly escorted, Hellice set on her return to the manse.

CHAPTER XLV.

What! we have many goodly days to see;
The liquid drops of tears that you have shed,
Shall come again, transform'd to orient pearl;
Advantaging their loan with interest
Oftentimes double gain of happiness.

—Richard III.

HELICE GLINTWICK'S heart filled to overflowing with joy too great for words, as, with one hand clasped in her lover's who walked beside her, she rode slowly back towards the manse. The world seemed transformed in her sight. Never had skies been so blue, air so sweet, songs of birds so musical. The sights and sounds of Nature blended with ineffable happiness. One thought alone arose from the sweet tumult in her soul. One fact alone—but that, like the handwriting on the wall in ancient days—stood out from the chaos of her mind. She was safe—Sir Richard was with her—and the old, true love, deepened

more than ten-thousand-fold, proclaimed itself in his voice, manner, and bearing.

For some time neither spoke. Perhaps it was that their eyes uttered a language tenderer than words would have conveyed. Perhaps it was, that the deep red, flitting in and out of the girl's dark cheeks, like wild birds fluttering about their nest, were more eloquent than loving epithets and assurances. In the sweet, rapturous silence, with hand clasped in hand, their souls communed together, and neither was conscious that the other had not spoken.

"Perhaps my presence is considered an intrusion," said Mr. William Haughton, at last, in an aggrieved tone, having borne the silence with extreme uneasiness. "If so, I'll fall behind. I must be allowed to say, however, that this is hardly the return I expected for bringing you two together again. You both seem to have forgotten your native language!"

Thus recalled to himself, the young Baronet looked at Hellice with a flushing cheek and gathering calmness. The words he longed to utter he reserved for a more fitting period. The caresses he longed to bestow he kept till they should be alone.

"Why did you run away from me, little Hellice?" he asked, and the girl felt his tones to be indescribably tender. "I have discovered that you left Holly Bank with Mr. Anchester. But why?"

"Because Miss Kenneth had written to Lady Redwoode, saying that I had attempted to poison her. She was really ill, Richard, and her fright and illness gave her a look that would have convinced almost anyone of my guilt. Mr. Anchester found me in the Holly Bank garden, in my hour of greatest distress. He told me that he had followed me from India because he loved me. He assured me that your pride would not allow you to marry a twice-suspected poisoner. He said that you were fearful of being deceived a second time, and that Lady Redwoode would never consent to our marriage. He offered me his friendship, since I refused his love. He had been papa's intimate friend, and an inmate of our Indian home. I believed my friends had all deserted me. His familiar face seemed better than a stranger's. And so—and so—"

"And so you accepted his friendship and protection," said Sir Richard, as the girl's voice faltered, and he smiled gravely, yet reassuringly, upon her. "Poor, guileless little dove! You little dreamed that you were flying direct into the snare of the fowler. I arrived at Holly Bank the night after your disappearance. Imagine my consternation to find you gone! Hellice, whatever joy the future may bring, I can never forget my desolation at that moment! Poor Lady Redwoode, too—"

He stopped abruptly, turning away his head to hide his sudden tears, while Mr. Haughton permitted his horse to fall behind the young couple, that his half-suppressed sobs might not attract attention.

"Did Lady Redwoode grieve too at my disappearance?" cried Hellice, not observing her companion's emotion.

"Yes! my darling," replied Sir Richard. "She always had suspicions that she might have chosen wrongly between you and Ceile, and her suspicions returned then with renewed force. She said to me, 'Perhaps, it is my daughter who is wandering homeless and friendless, while the child of my enemy occupies her rightful place!' We sought everywhere, employed detectives, but could find no trace of you. At length I learned that Mr. Anchester had been seen at the North Eldon station. I had discovered that he had known you in India, and so leapt to the conclusion that he knew your present whereabouts."

"After Ceile's marriage, Mr. Anchester left Redwoode a second time. I resolved to trace him. It was a work of time and patience, for he had taken a circuitous route, but I was at last rewarded with success. I have told you already of my visit to the Rookery. I learned without difficulty that a young lady had been

met some weeks ago at the station by the Rookery carriage, and was directed easily enough. A weak-witted lad and a frightened old woman at the Rookery told me where next to look. To what place was Mr. Anchester taking you?"

"I don't know," answered Hellice. "He was determined to marry me, even against my will. He has hunted me, and persecuted me as if I were a criminal. He pretends to love me, and I think he does. But Sir Richard," she added, solemnly, "I believe he has another reason for persecuting me. He believes that by a marriage with me he will attain rank and fortune."

"How so, darling?"

"He believes me to be the daughter of Lady Redwoode, or else wishes to pass me off as such," was the grave and thoughtful response. "As I said, he was papa's most intimate friend. Of all men, he was most likely to share papa's secrets. Do not think me wild or foolish, dear Sir Richard, but I have thought too that Lady Redwoode may have chosen wrongly between Cecile and me. At first, I had no doubts. But now something—perhaps instinct—tells me that my love and reverence for Lady Redwoode is the love and reverence of a daughter. I feel that I am her child. My heart cries out for her. I never loved my supposed parents as I love this beautiful lady. Am I wild and fanciful? Do you despise me for my vain longings?"

She looked at her lover through a mist of tears, her exquisite face so full of longing and yearning for the motherly love which Cecile had claimed, that the Baronet's heart bled for her. He comprehended that she had not yet heard of the supposed death of Lady Redwoode. He dreaded the effect of such a communication upon her. He could not bear to cloud the brightness of their reunion with a cloud so dark, so dense, and terrible, as a narration of Lady Redwoode's fate.

He turned, making a gesture commanding silence, to his uncle, who instinctively hushed his grief, and fell still farther into the rear, that Hellice might not mark his emotion.

"I do not think you wild and fanciful, Hellice," said the young Baronet, gently and gravely. "I have had thoughts too, that would corroborate or strengthen yours. But we had better not discuss them at present. Let us be practical, and think of the immediate present."

The girl assented, wonderingly.

"This Mr. Anchester," said Sir Richard, thoughtfully, "is a lawless man, with no respect for life or laws. This Scottish neighbourhood is wild and lonely. It has few inhabitants, and they are mostly fishermen. Their profession keeps them out at sea, sometimes for days. Mr. Anchester is a sort of king in his little valley. The few labourers I saw there were ignorant men, with the single idea of earning their bread and keeping their humble homes to which they are attached. They would obey Mr. Anchester as readily as if they were his serfs. You will wonder what all this means. Simply, my darling, that a prolonged stay in this vicinity will endanger our lives or safety. Mr. Anchester went away as a man who is worsted, not conquered. In my opinion, he will return this very night, armed and supported by his men, and seek to take you from me by force."

"What shall we do?" asked Hellice, growing pale.

"We must be gone when he arrives."

"Where shall we go? Not to Redwoode, dear Richard! I cannot go there until Lady Redwoode recalls me."

"No. You are right," said Sir Richard, pressing her hand. "Let me take you to Sea View as my wife, Hellice?" he added, in an impassioned tone. "This Scottish minister can marry us."

The maiden shook her head sadly.

"Dear Sir Richard!" she said, softly, "it cannot be. So long as Lady Redwoode forbids our union, so long we must keep apart. I can never marry in face of her opposition.

I can never become your wife while this cloud of disgrace is hanging over my head. When I can come to you honoured by others, as your bride should be honoured, I will come."

Sir Richard did not attempt to combat this resolution. He believed that he could set it aside by telling Hellice of Lady Redwoode's supposed death, and he bided his time. He talked of other subjects, dear to them both, and the two were equally surprised when they came at last to the manse.

They approached the gate quietly, Hellice was lifted from her steed, and she then hurried into the dwelling, her face glowing with joy.

The minister and his wife were sitting in the alcove in attitudes of the deepest grief. They looked up at sight of their young guest with glances they would have accorded a spectre. They had been signalling in vain to some of the fishing boats out at sea, in hopes of rescuing the maiden, but had resigned themselves at last to painful inaction.

"It is I, my friends!" said Hellice, smiling at their incredulous stare. "I am come back to you safe and well. This gentleman, my friend, Sir Richard Haughton," and she pointed to the Baronet, who stood behind her, while her face burned with blushes, "saved me from Mr. Anchester's hands!"

The sound of her voice broke the spell enchainning the good couple. They sprang up, and before Hellice had ceased speaking, they had clasped her in their arms, gathered her to their hearts, and overwhelmed her with caresses.

No daughter coming home after a long absence, could have received a heartier welcome from loving parents, than Hellice gained from these true-hearted friends.

The greetings were at length over. Sir Richard Haughton had been thanked and admired enough to have contented the vainest man in the kingdom. Mr. Haughton came in for his share of gratitude, which he coolly replied to, by declaring that he had a personal interest in the maiden's rescue, that she was engaged to marry his nephew, and that he was in duty bound to overcome all obstacles in the way of the marriage.

When the household had regained its calmness, and Mrs. Locke began to contemplate the possibility of a return to housekeeping cares, and the good simple-minded minister had become involved in an amicable controversy with Mr. Haughton, concerning some of the impossible mechanical schemes of the latter, the young baronet led his betrothed out into the garden.

There was a little rustic bench under a beech tree, screened from view by a thick growth of currant bushes, and the lovers took possession of this bench and engaged in conversation.

"I have been thinking, Richard," said Hellice, with downcast eyes, and shy blushes, "that I had better go back to Redwoode. I have been too proud, too wayward, too wilful. Suppose that I am really Lady Redwoode's daughter, and Cecile only her niece. In that case I should be doing wrong to stay away and leave her at the mercy of one whom I know to be unscrupulous and wicked. Richard, I must go back. I will tell her all the truth. I went to her chamber that night to save her, not to destroy her. It was Cecile who would have poisoned her!"

"I knew all that before, my darling!"

"But she—Lady Redwoode—does not know it. Take me to her, Richard. Take me at once!"

"Hellice!" said her lover, drawing her to his bosom, and speaking so gently and so gravely that the girl felt as if listening to the lowest and saddest of music. "Let me speak more plainly than I have yet done. I believe you to be Lady Redwoode's daughter!"

"You do, Richard?" cried Hellice, with irrepressible gladness and eagerness. "Oh, Richard! But Lady Redwoode—will she—ah, no, she loves Cecile best. She believes

me bad and wicked." She will never, never claim me," and the girl nestled closer to the Baronet, giving utterance to a hard, dry sob.

"Never, never!" repeated Sir Richard, with solemn emphasis. "Never in this world, Hellice!"

"Why not, Richard?" asked the girl, with sudden dread, caused by this unexpected confirmation of her forebodings.

"I mean, my darling," was the reply, uttered with infinite tenderness, "that if you are Lady Redwoode's daughter, your mother can never embrace you as her child, until you meet each other in the courts of heaven. Hellice, do you not comprehend? Lady Redwoode knows the whole truth now. She knows whether she chose wrongly or rightly, when she took Cecile to her heart and looked coldly upon you."

Hellice raised her head, regarding her lover in shocked astonishment.

"What!" she ejaculated, in a hollow whisper.

"She has gone to live with the angels," said Sir Richard, his blue eyes filling with tears.

"Dead!" whispered Hellice, in bewilderment. "Dead!"

The Baronet bowed his head in silence.

"Dead, and I was not with her!" said the girl, her eyes gleaming with startling effect from the midst of her deadly white face. "Dead, and she did not dream how I loved her! Dead!"

"She was my friend, too, my noble, true, earnest friend," said Sir Richard, his features working with agitation. "Hellice, I have suffered, too, by her loss. Let us comfort each other!"

"How did she die?" asked Hellice, with wild and tearful eyes.

"She was drowned. After the marriage of Cecile and Andrew Forsythe, the young couple, with her ladyship, and the Hindoo woman, went on a bridal tour, or excursion, to some distant seaport town. It was while there that Lady Redwoode met her fate. Mr. Forsythe, with his wife and Lady Redwoode, went out sailing. They had but one boatman, and the wind was boisterous, the sea rough. How it happened I cannot clearly understand. There was a capsizing. Mr. Forsythe, Cecile, and the boatman clung to the boat. Lady Redwoode was swept by the wind and current into a vortex known as the Pool. She was drowned, Hellice, and the sea still holds its dead!"

Hellice's eyes glowed strangely. Her bright, passionate face became stern, almost fierce, in its expression. Her glowing mouth that seemed meant to woo caresses, as roses woo the bees, was set in a smile of terrible meaning.

She had comprehended, as had no other, the horrible significance of that story.

"Richard," she said, her voice thrilling him by its changed tones, "I see what you do not. Lady Redwoode was decoyed to her doom. It was a pre-arranged plan. She was drowned by design!"

Sir Richard was startled, as well he might be, by this announcement, and Hellice's manner impressed him uncomfortably with a belief in its possibility.

"They plotted it together—Renee and Cecile," continued Hellice. "Oh, if I had only told the truth concerning that attempted poisoning! If I had only gone back to Redwoode after quitting Holly Bank. I knew what Cecile was, and yet I did not warn her!"

Her voice died out in a sob. Her overstrained brain sought relief in a violent and uncontrollable burst of weeping. Her lover did not check her tears. He held her in his arms and smoothed her hair, told the story of the supposed drowning, and wept with her, till the violence of the maiden's grief gave place to an unnatural calm.

Then he spoke again.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

FINANCIERING VOWELS.—I O U.

FOND of "put-up jobs"—An architect.

VOLUNTEER CIRCLES.—Rings on the target.

THE poorest of all relations—Relating a good story badly.

THE original son of a gun is supposed to have been a pistol.

THE DOWNWARD PATH.—The one with a piece of orange peel on it.

THE blonde is not in fashion, and the brunette has come again. Blondes must dye.

PROFESSOR YOUNG has discovered some new wrinkles on the face of the planet Venus. No doubt she is growing old.

THE way to bring a mother-in-law to her proper bearings is to ask her to remember the halcyon days when she was a daughter-in-law.

"Dig him out!" said the wife of the man who got buried by a falling wall. "Dig him out! He's got at least a sovereign in his pocket."

If the anatomy of some people were constructed upon the proportion of what they say to what they do, there wouldn't be anything of them but mouth.

PROFESSOR, looking at his watch: "As we have a few minutes, I shall be glad to answer any questions that any one may wish to ask." Student: "What time is it, please?"

INSTRUCTOR (examining geometrical figures on the board): "I don't understand these constructions." Student: "Very well; I'll see you after lecture and explain them to you."

"STEP this way, if you please, ladies," said the gracious shop-walker, as he led off with a majestic wave of his hand. "We are sorry," said madam, "but we never learned to walk that way."

"WHY do you set your cup of coffee on the chair, Mr. Jones?" asked a worthy landlady one morning at breakfast. "It's so very weak, ma'am," replied Jones, "I thought I would let it rest."

AUGUSTUS (to Jack): "Charming girl, that Miss Lucy, Jack." Jack: "Think so? I never could tear her. She always treats me as if I was an ass, you know." Augustus: "Indeed! I didn't know she knew you."

"PA," asked the small boy, "why do they call the first piece the organ plays in church the 'voluntary'?" "Because, my son," replied the old gentleman, "the organist runs his hands over the keys, and the organ goes wherever it pleases."

In a cemetery in France one reads: "Here lies Gabrielle, my adored wife. She was an angel. Never shall I be consoled for her loss." On the same stone is the following inscription: "Here lies Henrietta, my second wife. She was also an angel."

"WHAT is the meaning of this great sorrow?" asked a late-comer at a popular entertainment. "What is the audience weeping for?" "Professor Bangs, the elocutionist," whispered the usher, as he wiped his eyes, "has just finished reciting a humorous poem."

TEACHER: "John, what are your boots made of?" Boy: "Of leather, sir." Teacher: "Where does leather come from?" Boy: "From the hide of the ox." Teacher: "What animal, therefore, supplies you with boots and shoes, and gives you meat to eat?" Boy: "My father."

"I SHALL teach you to speak properly, and then to write as you speak," said a teacher in the public schools. "Poor Billy Wilcox!" said a little voice, involuntarily. "What about Billy?" asked the school-mistress. "Please, ma'am, he speaks through his nose; so he will have to write through his nose."

A POLICE sergeant was boasting of the honesty that prevailed in his precinct. "Why," he said, "you might hang your gold watch on a lamp-post in the evening, and find it still there in the morning." "You don't mean to say nobody would take the watch?" exclaimed the listener. "No; I mean to say nobody would take the lamp-post," said the sergeant.

HARD to beat—Carpets.

THE man who went to the tailor's for a dove cote, didn't get it.

THE loveliest flower seen at this season of the year is said to be the shad roes.

THE attorney who makes a speciality of admiralty cases must know all about the main law.

A FINANCIALLY weak citizen said the other day, that he was overlooked by the public. Nobody took any note of him.

WHEN the architect spoke of the great nave there was to be in the new church, a pious old lady said that she "knew to whom he referred."

THE proverb, "Never speak of the gallows in the house of the hung," grew out of the unimportant nature of the event. It is nothing to speak of.

"MARIAN," said a vain young man to his cousin, "can you tell me what a fop is?" "Oh, yes," she replied:

"A fop is one who takes great pains

About everything except his brains."

"ARE you going to follow the suggestion of the railway officials and adopt the mean time?" asked the watchmaker of Mr. Stebbins. "Mean time? No indeed! My watch keeps mean time enough now."

"How beautifully that woman sings!" said one lady to another, who was in gorgeous attire and blessing with diamonds. "Is she a mezzo-soprano?" "No, I guess not. I think she is a Swede," replied the other.

DIALOGUE IN A BOUDOIR.—"What lovely hair she has! I suppose it is her own?" "Oh, yes; of course it is. No doubt, if you ask, she will prove it, for she told me only a few days ago that she was careful to keep all her recipes."

"I WANT a dog's muzzle," said a little fellow, entering a hardware shop. "Is it for your father?" asked the cautious shopkeeper. "No, of course it isn't," replied the little fellow, indignantly; "it's for our dog." The shopkeeper has resolved to be more guarded in the future when he asks customers questions.

A REFRESHMENT bar on a northern railway is kept by a veteran baker. A sprightly young traveller complained of one of his pies the other day. The old man became angry. "Young man," he said, severely, "I made pies before you were born." "Yes," responded the traveller; "I fancy this must be one of those same pies!"

LITTLE BILLY, who was about four years old, after waiting for his lunch a good while with commendable patience, said: "Mamma, may I have some sardines and bread?" To which the fond mother replied: "Not now, Billy. Wait until I am ready to give them to you." "But, ma, it's me who's hungry, not you." And the poor little fellow's eyes filled with tears.

"It is strange," said a lady at a boarding-house breakfast table, "that people can tell the age of animals by the teeth." "Not at all," said an old gentleman. "I can tell a chicken's age in that way." "Why?" exclaimed the lady, "a chicken hasn't any teeth!" To this the old gentleman testily replied: "Madam, I know that a chicken hasn't any teeth, but I have!"

A YOUNG couple in their honeymoon are dallying languidly with the grapes at the dessert. She (archly): "And you don't find it tiresome, dear, all alone with me? You are quite sure that you don't wish to go back to your bachelor life again?" He (earnestly): "Quite, my darling. Indeed, married life is so awfully jolly that, you know, if you were to die to-night, I'd get married again to-morrow."

"Isn't it a grand sight?" exclaimed an enthusiastic member of an Eastern rifle club, as the boys were peppering away at their beautiful painted target. "Very pretty," assented a stranger from the far West; "it reminds me of a Vassar College commencement I once attended." "Strange!" muttered the member, suspiciously. "Why does our shoot remind you of a Vassar commencement?" "It is such a beautiful collection of misses," replied the stranger from the far West.—American Paper.

SCEPTICAL—"Have you read Haggard's 'She'?" he asked. "Yes," she replied; "and do you know that I don't believe it is more than half true?"

A COIN OF ADVANTAGE.—The smallest coin in China is called "cash," and several of them are required to equal one of our pence. A similar coin in this country would induce our people to "come down with the cash" oftener when they go to church.

A FREAK OF MEMORY.—A writer says that "the faculty of memory is simply the art of paying attention." Many tailors and shoemakers regret that memory is not merely the art of paying bills. That would be so much more satisfactory than paying attention.

THE CZAR'S PRECAUTIONS.—The Czar of Russia, it is stated, always has 50,000 soldiers guarding him when he travels by rail. We should think that would be almost as expensive as to travel alone, and submit to the extortions of the sleeping-car porters.

BUT IT CURED HIM.—Alpha was reading aloud: "A man who had killed two men and stolen a horse, was taken from the police and hanged by a mob." "Only hanged!" said Omega, absent-mindedly, "There must have been some extenuating circumstances."

WHAT HE DID NOT WANT.—"Who's there?" said Jenkins, one cold winter night, disturbed in his repose by someone knocking at the street door. "A friend," was the answer. "What do you want?" "Want to stay here all night." "Well, stay there by all means," was the benevolent answer.

MORRIS (to her daughter, just seven years old): "What makes you look so sad, Carrie?" Carrie (looking at her baby brother, three weeks old): "I was just thinking that in about ten years from now, when I shall be entering company and having beaux, that brother of mine will be just old enough to bother the life out of me."

A SAD young man perceived one morning that the milk he was pouring into his coffee was of an inferior quality, and said to his hostess, in a melancholy tone: "Haven't you any milk that is more cheerful than this?" "What do you mean by that?" asked the hostess. "Why, this milk seems to have the blues," responded the sad young man.

A PAIR of "Ems"—"I do wonder where all the spoons are!" complained Mrs. Tydie, who was preparing the Sunday afternoon tea. "Have you missed any?" asked her husband, casting his eyes towards the parlour where his daughter Mamie was entertaining her young man. "I saw a couple of 'spoons' on the sofa as I passed through the parlour a few minutes ago." And Mamie, who overheard the remark, told her mother that she felt so mortified that she could have sunk through the floor.

As a fashionable church was open for a wedding last week, there entered with the earlier guests an old lady who took a seat very near the altar. She watched each group as it came in, appearing to be disconcerted at their gait of attire and manner. Finally, she addressed some people, several pews distant, asking, in a penetrating voice: "What is it that's going on here to-day?" "A wedding," was the reply. She rose, dramatically, and said: "Then I'm going to leave; I thought 'twas a temperance meeting. I'd stay for a funeral, but not for any wedding."

BEWARE OF COUNTERFEITS.—A man in Moorfield, with a billiard-ballish looking head, spent five pounds for renovators "warranted to make the hair come out," but they failed to go right to the spot. Recently he married a red-headed woman with three children, and two weeks later he came home from a political caucus at 2 A.M., kicked open the chamber door, and insisted upon getting into bed without removing his boots. His wife remonstrated, and in the argument that followed what little hair he had came out in less than two minutes. If his locks had been as long and luxuriant as the tresses of the late Mr. Samson, it is believed that they would have all come out in about five minutes. And the marriage ceremony cost him only a pound, too—and was not warranted to bring out the hair either.

SOCIETY.

EVERY member of the Household—past and present—who subscribed to the Jubilee gift which was presented to the Queen last June, has received a silver medal, "to be worn in commemoration of Her Majesty's Jubilee."

COUNT GLIMCHEN has completed a monument erected by the Dowager Marchioness of Londonderry to her late husband. The subject is a female figure kneeling before a cross. It is supposed to represent the sorrowing widow.

THE Duke of Connaught, as also His Excellency the Governor and Lady Reay, were present at the Annual Poona Horticultural Show. The show was held for the first time in the Empress Gardens. Two prizes were offered by the Duke of Connaught for the prettiest dinner table decorations for a party of eight. No such competition having been held in former years, the novelty was very attractive. Fourteen tables were arranged in a tent, but there was a general feeling that the prizewinner had not been awarded to the ladies whose work showed most artistic merit.

ENERGETIC endeavours are being made in every direction to excite native interest in Lady Dufferin's scheme. Forty-seven girls are now studying at Agra under a matron and two lady doctors holding diplomas. The like arrangements have been made at Calcutta, Durbhunga, Lahore, and Alwar. The supply, however, falls far short of the demand. It is urgently desired, in order to promote the philanthropic object of the scheme, that the association should be largely recruited in England. One of the most recent indications of energy in connection with the scheme is that which is reported to the central committee from Nagpore, where Dr. Barter's midwifery class at the Mayo Hospital has already assumed large proportions, attracting pupils not only from the central provinces but from the Berars, as well, whence half a dozen young women are to be sent to the Cama Hospital at Bombay. That the Nagpore class is drawing women of good caste, may be inferred from the fact that one of them is a highly accomplished Brahmin lady, the head mistress of a flourishing girls' school, who has temporarily left her school in order to qualify herself as a medical woman.

PRESIDENT and MRS. CLEVELAND and their party have returned to Washington in good health. During the three weeks of journeying the President travelled 4,500 miles, passed through seventeen States, crossing three of them twice, and saw, and was seen by, a multitude of American citizens, variously estimated by different members of the party at from 1,000,000 to 5,000,000.

A good exhibition of Mrs. Jarley's wax-works, together with a Punch and Judy show, was organised and arranged by Miss Reikes, daughter of the Postmaster-General and was given the other afternoon and evening at the Town Hall, Mold. Miss Reikes herself took the part of Mrs. Jarley, and in her quaint costume did honour to the character, whilst she described in an amusing manner the various groups and subjects. The different groups were: "Jack Spratt and his Wife," "Simple Simon," "Red Riding Hood," "King Alfred and the Cakes," "Santa Claus," "Cinderella," "Mrs. Gamp and Betsy Prig," "Queen Elizabeth and Raleigh," "The Bachelor and his Love," "The Three Old Maids of Lee." The Punch and Judy show was also most amusing, and was succeeded by "A Chamber of Horrors," consisting of other entertaining and ridiculous groups. At the conclusion of the performance in the evening the Assembly Room was cleared and a dance took place, which was kept up with much spirit.

STATISTICS.

THE BRITISH STANDING ARMY.—The "General Annual Return of the British Army" for the year 1886 has just been presented to Parliament. On the 1st of December, 1886, the composition of the personnel of the army was as follows: Officers, 7,204; warrant officers, 687; sergeants and farriers, 12,756; buglers, &c., 3,876; rank and file, 184,540; total, 208,563. The nationalities of the non-commissioned officers and men of the army were as follows: English, 146,171; Scotch, 16,446; Irish, 32,153; various, 3,437.

THE AMERICAN CORN CROP.—The Agricultural Department of the United States for October places the corn crop at about three-fourths of a full crop, or at 1,500,000,000 bushels. The crop as it stands is the smallest in ten years but one, in 1881, when it was 1,100,000,000 bushels; the present yield is greater chiefly because of the large crop at the South, which is 150,000,000 bushels heavier than two years ago. The South will this year produce nearly enough for its own consumption. The great corn states, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Kansas, have scarcely half a crop, and in Missouri the yield is not large. This will reduce the pork crop in these states and make farming but losing work, for there is no money in wheat in these older states at present prices. The spring wheat states, on the other hand, have one of the best crops on record, the total yield being 450,000,000 bushels, a fair but not a profitable average for the country.

GEMS.

GREAT efforts from great motives is the best definition of a happy life.

THE easiest labour is a burden to him who has no motive for performing it.

TALKING is like playing on the harp; there is as much in touching the strings to stop their vibrations as in twanging them to bring out their music.

IT is impossible to be too conscientious; but it is quite possible to develop this quality in a very one-sided way, and to neglect to examine or to verify the principles on which it rests.

WE lose its respect with the good when seen in company with malice; and to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

JAMS and jellies should be poured into the pots the moment they are taken off the fire, by which means a sort of skin forms upon the top in cooling, which, if not broken, will keep out the air.

OYSTER FRITTERS.—Three eggs, three table-spoons of flour, half pint of milk. This will make about eighteen fritters; the batter thin, and the oysters to be put in while baking, about four to a fritter.

FRIED TOMATOES.—Cut the tomatoes in slices without skinning, pepper and salt them; then sprinkle a little flour over them, and fry in butter until brown. Put them on a hot platter, and pour a little cream into the butter and juice. When boiling hot pour over the tomatoes. This dish is very nice served with birds.

LIGHT PASTE FOR TARTS AND CHEESECAKES.—Beat the white of an egg to a strong froth; then mix it with as much water as will make three-quarters of a pound of fine flour into a stiff paste; roll it very thin; then lay the third part of half-pound of butter upon it in little bits; dredge it with some flour left out at first, and roll it up tight. Roll it out again, and put the same proportion of butter; and so proceed till all be worked up.

MISCELLANEOUS.

IT may be your prayer is like a ship, which, when it goes on a very long voyage, does not come home laden so soon; but when it does come home, it has a richer freight. Mere "coasters" will bring coals or such like ordinary things; but they that go afar to Tarshish, return with gold and ivory. Coasting prayers, such as we pray every day, bring us many necessities; but there are great prayers, which, like the old Spanish galleons, cross the main ocean, and are longer out of sight, but come deeply laden with a golden freight.

INCOMBUSTIBLE LACE.—The new French incombustible lace is quite a novelty, and the composition by which the result is achieved is equally adapted, it seems, to rendering wool and paper unflammable. It is a mixture of eighty parts pure sulphate of ammonia, twenty-five parts carbonate of ammonia, thirty parts boracic acid, seventeen parts pure borax, twenty parts starch, and one thousand parts distilled or pure water. These ingredients are most thoroughly combined; the materials are dipped in this solution while hot, so as to be completely impregnated, after which they are dried and ironed as ordinary starch fabrics.

CURATIVE QUALITIES OF HONEY.—It is stated that honey is both an irritant and a sedative. We mean that its first effects may irritate, followed with a sedative effect. All the liniments work beneficially on this principle, the same with the most of eye waters, etc. The solution of honey as an eye water proves particularly beneficial on account of its antiseptic, absorbent and resolvent properties. It cures inflammation of the eye, in the way a solution of boracic acid does, mainly by reason of its antiseptic and sedative properties. The irritant properties of honey are in a great measure destroyed by dilution. Therefore as a topical irritant, where we wish to favour resolution by counteraction, it is used in pure state, or in conjunction with other more active irritants. It is its irritant or rubefacient effect, joined with its emollient nature, that precipitates local inflammation into suppuration, and is, therefore, a suitable remedy for abscesses, boils, etc. Therefore, woe to the one that applies a honey plaster over an inflamed eye in place of the solution! As a rubefacient and absorbent it makes an excellent local application in glandular swelling and in chronic tumefaction, in particular when joined with iodine, iodoform, or mercury.

DELICATE ODOURS.—Ladies no longer sprinkle themselves with triple extracts, but confine themselves to the merest hint of perfume. Delicate odours, such as violet, heliotrope or orris root, are always permissible, just as patchouly and musk are always to be shunned. In any event, perfume in the shape of sachet powder is to be preferred to liquid extracts. Nobody nowadays ever thinks of putting perfume on a handkerchief or rubbing it on one's hands. Laces, underwear, ribbons, note-paper, gloves, and all small articles of dress are made fragrant by large sachet bags that are of a size corresponding to the bureau or dressing-table drawers. These bags are composed of silk and lined with raw cotton, upon which the powder is spread. This, in addition to a very moderate use of a faint, suggestive odour, such as the wood violet, for instance, is all in the way of perfume that is allowable by a really refined woman. Parisian dressmakers now have a way of sending perfumed gowns to their customers. A strange feature connected with this fashion is the fact that the odour remains for ever. A lady, having purchased a costume whose every fold breathed the most delicious perfume, sent an order to Paris for a sample of the scent employed. The dressmaker forwarded her, by express, a small bottle of ordinary looking sachet powder. Accompanying it was a bill to the amount of £8. The lady paid the money, but since then has generally inquired the price of things before ordering.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. H.—Good, but not quite good enough.

W. B. G.—No personal knowledge of it; make some other investment.

C. S.—Genesta is pronounced *jeenesta*—G soft and accent on the second syllable.

EDDY E.—1. Certainly. 2. We have not the receipt, but will endeavour to obtain it.

A. HARRISON.—You should consult a specialist on the subject of skin diseases, or go to a hospital at once.

F. J.—The only way is to read aloud very slowly for say a couple of hours a day. It arises from nervousness.

C. M. F.—The sailing ship *Red Jacket*, in 1854, made the passage from New York to Liverpool in 13 days 1 hour and 25 minutes.

K. K.—Evidences a good education and neatness. Her sister would perhaps be a little less decided. Both, we should infer, good-natured.

TIP.—If you refer to the Royal Navy you will have to pass a special examination, the subjects of which can be obtained from the Admiralty.

E. L. D.—Exercise in the open air will help you. If unable to take it outdoors, the frequent use of dumbbells and Indian clubs indoors will prove of benefit.

LOTTIE.—Some form of expression like this would be appropriate: "I appreciate the compliment you pay me, but you must excuse me from playing, for I am not now in good practice."

E. K.—The Sovereign does not change surname on marriage. The Queen's family name, borne by all her children, is D'Este-Guelph. The late Prince Consort's family name was Watman.

C. G.—It is customary for the lady on her wedding-day to present some souvenir of the occasion to each of her bridesmaids. The gift need not be costly. A ring, or bracelet, or fan is always appropriate.

BUFFALO BILL (Junior, we presume).—1. There is not much difference. The highest pay is in the household brigade. 2. We do not, except exercise. Join a gymnasium. 3. Your handwriting is too unformed.

C. R. N.—A homestead is a person's dwelling-place, with the outbuildings connected with it, and a portion of the land, as the garden, or it may be fields, &c. Also the place of origin; as, "We can trace them back to a homestead," &c.

DISAPPOINTED NEIL.—Don't be harsh on him. Ask him in a friendly way whether he saw the Exhibition, and whom he took to see it, adding that you suppose he forgot all about his promise to you, and then you will see how the land lies.

C. H.—Goshen, in Biblical geography, is the district of Egypt in which Jacob and his family settled, and where his descendants remained until their deliverance by Moses. The locality is generally fixed in Lower Egypt, east of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile.

AMY.—Linsed Tea.—Take three tablespoonfuls of linsed, about one pint of water, and boil for ten minutes. Strain off the water, put in a jug with two lemons, cut in thin slices; put also some brown sugar. A wineglassful of wine is an improvement. This has been found most nourishing for invalids.

T. D.—The St. Gotthard Tunnel on the line of railway between Lucerne and Milan is unequalled in length by any other ever constructed. The summit of this tunnel is 900 feet below the surface at Andermatt, and 6,000 feet beneath the peak of Kastelhorn in the St. Gotthard group. It is 34½ feet wide, 18 feet 10 inches in height from the floor to the crown of its arched roof, and 9½ miles in length.

D. S. R.—Indiscriminate kissing, as we have often pointed out, is a custom which happily is indulged in by comparatively few young ladies; consequently, it is not liable to at any time become epidemic. The young man alluded to should have been satisfied with being accorded the honour of acting as your escort to the party without wishing to exact a toll, in the shape of a kiss, for services rendered. Let him wait until he has earned the right by becoming your affianced husband.

G. B.—The last royal Governor of Massachusetts, U.S.A., was Thomas Gage. He was born in England, and died there in April, 1787. He arrived in Boston in May, 1774, while the people of that colony were preparing for resistance to the acts of the British Government. He was instructed to seize and punish Samuel Adams and Hancock, but never even attempted their arrest. He planned the expedition to Concord, which resulted in the battle of Lexington, and established martial law throughout Massachusetts. He offered pardon to all who would return to their allegiance save Adams and Hancock. After the battle of Bunker Hill he was superseded by General Howe.

B. D. F.—The Pitti Palace in Florence, Italy, derives its name from Luca Pitti, the opponent of the Medici family, about the year 1455. It is of great magnitude, the front being 400 feet in length, three storeys (of 40 feet each) high in the centre, and with the centres of its windows 24 feet apart. It is conceded, we believe, that there is no palace in Europe to compare with it in grandeur, though many may surpass it in elegance. The Pitti gallery contains many of the best works of Michael Angelo, Titian, Salvator Rosa, Andrea del Sarto, Murillo, Rubens, and several of Raphael's, including the celebrated "Madonna della Seggiola."

E. G. H.—Beautiful spelling and composition, but miserable penmanship. A little patient practice will remedy this trouble.

J. S.—It would be impossible for us to state the constituents of the compound quoted, or vouch for its efficacy or harmlessness.

F. F. W.—The largest theatre in the world is the Grand Opera House in Paris, France. It covers nearly three acres of land, and cost about 100,000,000 francs.

M. K. W.—Your penmanship denotes considerable masculinity of character, being devoid of the gentle touch so inseparably associated with the feminine portion of humanity.

L. I.—Let well enough alone, and permit the young man to indulge in his sulkiness, thinking your stars in the meantime that you are well rid of a most disagreeable, over-bearing acquaintance.

N. C.—The engagement ring may be worn on the first or third finger of the left hand, although it is generally customary to place it on the first finger of the hand. Very often, after marriage, it is worn as a guard to the wedding-ring.

W. H.—According to records, some of the ladies of the Court of Louis XV. wore artificial eyebrows made of moleskin. The chronicler fails to make any extended comment regarding the general effect of this grotesque ornamentation.

S. P. D.—Doubtless he is one of those rattle-brained, conceited nonentities—called, by a strain of courtesy, men—who imagine that every woman they meet is enamored by their charming manners, clothes or some other outward badge of their idleness. This being the case, it would be best to give him the cold shoulder and allow him, like water, to sink to his own level.

MY STATUE.

Cold as the statue that Pygmalion warmed
To life with love's first kiss,
She stood beneath the moon's soft silvery beams
On such a night as this.

Truth lay within her eyes' clear azure depths,
Like some translucent gem,
While modesty's encircling mantle fell
Even to her garment's hem.

About her feet the grasses whispered low,
As if in sudden fear
At finding so much dainty loveliness
Standing to them afeared.

Upon the snowy marble of her brow,
Uplifted to the sky,
Like mute caresses, the soft lustrous waves
Of her dark hair hid lie.

Her taper fingers tore a flower in twain
With their white frosty tips,
While not the shadow of a smile dared touch
The proud curves of her lips.

Could love give to this statue warmth and life?
"Ah, I would rather die,
Slain by the lightning of thine eyes, than live
Without thy love," I cry.

A rosy flush, creeping from lip to brow,
The lovely statue warms—
And 'tis a woman yields with tender grace
To love's encircling arms!

R. A.

DORA.—The reason you have never yet had a beau may be because you are so young and are still a school-girl. After you get through with your schooling it will be time enough for you to think of beaux. Instead of "speaking first" to your boy schoolmate, you should have some one—say one of your teachers—introduce you to each other. If that should not be convenient, then have some mutual friend introduce you.

P. N. S.—The quarter-deck of a ship is the upper deck behind the mainmast. Naval etiquette requires all persons to salute on coming on the quarter-deck, and to conduct themselves in a decorous manner while occupying it. The starboard (right-hand side looking towards the stern of the vessel) in port and the weather side (that towards the wind) at sea are reserved for the use of the commanding and executive officers and the officer of the deck.

G. H. V.—The authorities differ greatly with regard to the cause and extent of the Gulf Stream. It is supposed that the prevailing winds blows the waters of the Atlantic into the Caribbean Sea, while the Mississippi and other great rivers pour vast floods into the Gulf of Mexico. The only escape for this accumulation of water is through the Straits of Florida and the narrows of Bimini, whence it issues with such momentum as to form the Gulf Stream. The rotation of the earth is also supposed to have some effect upon the acceleration of its velocity. The rate at which the Gulf Stream flows is from one mile to five miles an hour. The action of the wind upon it is said to make a great difference in its velocity. Some geographers maintain that the Gulf Stream flows in a vast volume, of great depth, up past the southern point of Greenland and clear around to the coast of Norway. Other authorities dispute this theory, and maintain that the influence of the Gulf Stream does not extend much beyond Greenland. Investigations are now being pushed to settle this question; but it will probably be many years before it will be conclusively determined.

H. R.—Considering that the records of pugilists are of no special interest to the general reader, we have not collected or preserved any data bearing upon that subject.

V. V.—Red pepper grows as a plant and can be raised in gardens. The pods are sometimes sold in groceries. Unground allspice and cinnamon can also be obtained at first-class groceries.

E. S.—Mardi gras is a French phrase, and stands for what in English is Shrove Tuesday; that is, the Tuesday before Ash-Wednesday. It is the last day of the carnival in countries where the carnival is celebrated.

F. S.—The Greeks were an unusually fine race of people to begin with, and they paid a vast deal more attention to physical culture than any nation does now. So it is not unreasonable to suppose that they excelled the moderns in physical prowess.

E. G.—You refer to the couplet:—
"Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to."
The author of it was Samuel Butler. It occurs in his humorous poem, "Hudibras."

GEORGE.—Ask him to explain what he means by its being "a matter of love and duty." Perhaps in attempting to explain it he will find there is nothing in it, and return to his allegiance. If he does not, then let him go, and accept the attentions of other gentlemen.

E. F.—Its value would depend largely upon its state of preservation and its rarity. If it is in an excellent state of preservation, and if there are but few similar coins of its date known to be in existence, it would be worth much more than if it is worn or defaced, or if there are many of its date extant.

J. E. J.—We are not inclined to discuss questions of a political nature here, as a column devoted to the interests of the general reader cannot be used as the medium of airing opinions regarding a subject on which so many persons disagree. It is self-evident that such must necessarily be the case, or political parties could not exist.

C. S. D.—You probably refer to lines in Scott's "Lord of the Isles." In the fifth canto of that poem the following passage occurs:—

"O, many a shaft, at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant!
And many a word, at random spoken,
May soothe, or wound, a heart that's broken."

E. H. S.—1. The first congratulations should be offered by the immediate relative who happens to be nearest to the bride. 2. An only sister need not stand upon ceremony. She should express her happiness in her sister's happiness, and wish her joy at the first opportunity after the ceremony. 3. It is the duty of the ushers to introduce guests to the bride and bridegroom.

E. A. H.—Customs and people differ about such matters. In some places the bridegroom supplies his groomsmen with gloves and neckties, and the bridesmaids with flowers; while the bride furnishes the dresses for her bridesmaids. When this is not done, it is customary for the wedded pair to give each of their respective attendants some keepsake—usually a piece of jewellery—as a memento of the occasion.

W. S.—Potato Scallops.—Mince very finely some streaked bacon or tolerably lean ham, a few savory herbs, or, failing these, a little parsley; salt and pepper to taste. Mix with the mashed potato in the proportion of three parts vegetable to one of meat; fill some scallop-shells with the mixture, put a bit of butter on the top of each, and brown in the oven. This makes a pretty breakfast or supper dish, served with poached eggs.

L. C. D.—Historically and literally considered, the Irish language is the same as the Gaelic. It is also called the Erse, and the Erish, which is the same word, etymologically, as Irish. There are many grammars and dictionaries of this language, and its historic and literary remains, which are very voluminous, have been industriously collected, translated, and annotated by modern scholars, both in Scotland and Ireland, as well as in Germany.

R. J.—Business communications are always answered by post; those relating to other subjects through the medium of this department. You should make your own choice of a trade or profession, and not refer such a vital question to those who have no knowledge of your capabilities or taste. If you have any special liking for the trade of an engraver on wood, by all means follow it up, and there is but little doubt of your ultimate success.

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